

## **Brantham Regeneration Area (Main Modification 25)**

### **Response to questions from Brantham Parish Council**

1 Brantham Parish Council has asked to be allowed to participate in the viability testing and consideration of options but this has been refused to date.

We must remember that the owners are not farmers but nevertheless they bought the green field land –presumably with the intention of obtaining planning permission for development. While the recent market for land has been slow, the Government initiatives and economic recovery are likely to increase the demand and price of land for development, making the brown field site more viable.

### **2 Sewage**

There are sewage flow problems and unpleasant odours from time to time in parts of the village which suggest to the layman that the current system is at or close to capacity and significant investment will likely be necessary to both cope with additional homes and to upgrade the existing system.

### **Access**

From what we have seen the Core Strategy and the transport studies to date have not fully addressed the impact of additional traffic.

We understand that if building on the proviso D land proceeds the traffic is likely to access the site via Brooklands Road where we understand options to purchase houses for demolition to provide access have been already been obtained.

Outside working hours Brooklands Road can best be described as a chicane due to the parking congestion caused by homes having insufficient off road parking (see attachment). A high volume of traffic already passes through New Village at peak times where the older properties are closer to the road and there are increased parking issues.

Any traffic heading north to go towards Ipswich will have to wind through the Palfrey Heights Estate and access the A137 by the T junction on Brantham Hill. Visibility turning right is not good and it is difficult accessing the main road at peak times.

We consider that Brooklands Road is unable to handle any additional traffic.

The traffic on the A137 is also subject to bottle necks at the railway crossing going south and the narrow bridge at the northern end of the village, exacerbated by diverted traffic regularly grinding to a halt on the A137 whenever there is a problem on the A12. At peak times there are already lengthy queues mornings and evenings at Wherstead where the A137 meets the A14, and then on Bourne Hill and the approach to Ipswich. These queues will only get worse when the Ganges development proceeds. Therefore new development at Brantham should be limited.

The access issues need to be considered alongside additional pressures on road traffic from other new developments being considered in Essex, ie Lawford. These problems can only be overcome by substantial capital expenditure.

It should be noted that there is only one bus leaving Brantham at 7.25am that will get you to work in Ipswich and the last bus home leaves at 17.40pm. There are no buses to Colchester.

3 BDC will need to answer this question.

4 BDC will need to comment. We are of the opinion that development of the scale being considered should be sited closer to the larger towns where employment, retail and leisure activities are provided thus reducing the need to drive and keeping carbon emissions as low as possible. It is unrealistic and unfair to expect a development in Brantham of c600 homes out of 1050 allocated to Core and Hinterland villages in the Core Strategy.

5 The latest information on households is set out in the Navigus Planning report in the library of documents. This quotes the number of households at 1040. We note the studies undertaken and understand c600 houses are being considered by St Francis – a c60% increase! If this goes ahead it will destroy the village and replace the blight of industrial development with the blight of residential over development.

Any new development needs to be in proportion to the existing village. 300 new homes will take several years to complete and absorb into the village. We note that Proviso C says that “the scale location and form of residential development should be determined with regard to; “a level that is proportionate in scale to the existing village/parish and capable of satisfactory assimilation”

c300 homes on the brown field site is not in proportion with the village so there is no requirement for Proviso D as this would allow a higher number of homes.

### **Impact on Facilities**

Education facilities are an issue. If the development goes ahead at the numbers suggested a site for a new primary school is likely to be required. The local high schools are also at or near capacity.

There are no healthcare facilities in the village. A new/larger village hall will be required. There are insufficient sports fields in the village with the cricket club having to share with the football club and the football club having to train at a pitch in Raydon. A convenience store in the lower part of the village will probably also be required.

6 As we have not been allowed to see the viability evidence we cannot comment as to whether all options using the brownfield land have been explored. We are constantly being told that the demands on agricultural land will increase considerably in the coming years as world population growth continues – this land should remain in agricultural use.

7. Brantham should remain a Hinterland village. East Bergholt is considered to be a Core village as it has a large health centre/pharmacy, a high school, and an extensive sports and fitness centre. Brantham has none of these.

East Bergholt has more shops and 3 more pubs than Brantham. Both have some light industrial/business units, Brantham probably has more blue collar jobs based on the industry left in Factory Lane although Bergholt has more service jobs taking into account the shops, large garden centre, Field Studies Centre, High school, sports centre and associated jobs.

East Bergholt is anti any 'estate development' hence it is trying to transfer its core village status to Brantham. However there is plenty of flat land on the north, west and east side of the village which could be developed without impacting on Flatford/Constable Country on the south side of the village.

East Bergholt has close access to the main arterial road (the A12) for people travelling to Ipswich, Colchester and London.

The car is the most likely form of transport to Manningtree station for both East Bergholt and Brantham residents; East Bergholt has a slightly better bus service than Brantham.

8 We understand the owners are not developers. The village has a concern that if planning permission is granted on the Proviso D land it could immediately be sold with the risk that the brown field land may not be cleaned up to everyone's satisfaction.

We believe there is likely to be little employment regeneration given the sites location with no easy access to the A12 and the distance from the A14. New/small business units may be taken up in due course, although there is competition from existing units in the local area.

Most people will drive to Colchester or Ipswich increasing traffic on the overcrowded A137, or commute to London. Trains are at or near capacity at peak time, the station car park cannot cope and most people will drive to the station, increasing congestion at the station crossing or, if driving to Ipswich, at the other end of the village at the 20mph bridge. The Proviso D land is approximately 1.4 miles from Manningtree station making it unlikely many people will walk to/from the station. Cycling is not an option for most people who have to dress smartly for work leaving the car as the favoured form of transport to/from the station. The cycle compound at the station is full. Cycling and walking to the station is currently dangerous due to having to cross the traffic flow and the narrow underpass which has to be shared with motor vehicles as there is no footpath.

For a bus service to work it would have to run a constant loop around the village to/from the station for a minimum of 3 hours morning and night. This will not be viable without a subsidy. What happens when the subsidy runs out?

9 The actions of BDC and some of its councillors have caused many villagers to believe this process is just an exercise. Brantham Parish Council has advised BDC of its concerns and remains concerned at the refusal to date to share the viability evidence. Brantham Parish Council are concerned that BDC is being influenced by the New Homes Bonus/targets and is determined to develop this site. The process to date has been poorly handled and has largely ignored the wishes of residents.

Please remember Brantham is not anti- development it just wants common sense to prevail and to be treated fairly.

We have had to live with an eyesore for over 100 years due to the poor decisions of the past; we are quite content to wait a few more years if it means the best long term solution is found.



Patten Bush Close



Brooklands Road south and north

