

SPROUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Sproughton Parish Council review of BMSDC Document: 'JLP Additional Text Suggestions to Inspector'

1. Points of Agreement

- 1.1. **ST07 Para 15.27** We welcome a strong paragraph to protect Valued Landscape. SPC object to BMSDC's intention to remove the '*Special Landscape Area*' definition from local planning policy which was based on a clear definition of the areas that required special attention with regard to landscape impacts. '*Valued Landscape*' is a subjective definition that will be open to legal challenge by developer but retains some protection of these areas.
- 1.2. **ST12, LP24(1)** We welcome this change to move the goalpost from isolated remote areas to be applied to rural areas. However we are confused by the conflict with ST03(3) for housing which BMSDC have moved effectively in precisely the opposite direction.
- 1.3. **ST13, LP24(2)(d)** We welcome the policy amendment to consider cumulative impacts from new agricultural facilities on rural roads particularly from heavy vehicles. However, with most agricultural traffic being sporadic the simple quantifier of '*severe*' seems flawed. A couple of tractors with trailers in the peak period can have a massive impact on traffic and none on homes whereas 50 HGV's leaving a food process plant at 5am might have no impact on traffic but could wake up a whole village.
- 1.4. **ST20, LP32(4)** We would welcome better links to services and hope the inclusion of such a requirement here will result in practical public services and alternative transport opportunities to take people out of their cars.
- 1.5. **ST21, LP34(2)** We welcome the amendments regarding the inclusion of Health facilities however we also consider the policy should be applied to new facilities. Areas presently being targeted for growth create opportunities for more growth. This situation is already arising in the Chantry Vale (Wolsey Grange¹) where the school for the approved phase has been identified as inadequate for the proposed expansion. Had the site approved for the first school been sufficient to expand to accommodate the proposed expansion, the delay in building the needed school would not be an issue. It is entirely possible that there will be further expansion by other developers close by over future plan periods so it would be counter productive to limit a new facilities ability to expand in line with future growth.

2. Points of Objection

- 2.1. **ST03, SP03(3):** BMSDC appears to be abandoning the definition within policy that effectively defined '*outside settlement boundaries*' as countryside. Now there is a definition of isolated countryside locations that will simply be subject to NPPF rules with no local plan policy on rural development. Sites outside the settlement boundaries appear to have been ignored completely. We are confused why a rural district can't define what areas are countryside in view of expected "U" turn by government on such issues. This now appears inappropriate.
- 2.2. **ST06, Para 15.25:** This section now rather puts the cart before the horse as the trigger for a LVIA requires increased certainty of an adverse impact. But, that can only be quantified properly by a LVIA in the first place. The original trigger was where there MAY be impact which provides stronger support for anyone who is not a LVIA consultant to comment & make such a decision. Whereas '*IS*' or '*LIKELY TO*' requires some justification for the requirement for an LVIA. So it is challengeable and probably can only be legally

¹ The developer is Taylor Wimpey

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justified by someone qualified to make LVIA judgements. Since Developers are unlikely to seek to make such a call we assume that Planning Officers will need to be qualified to make LVIA Assessments to make such a call – are any plans being put in place for this??

- 2.3. **ST10, LP22(1)(i):** Whereas the total avoidance of and adverse impacts on highways may be impractical the ideal aim should surely be always to improve highway safety wherever possible. To lower this to a requirement only to avoid significant or severe adverse impact on highway safety is in our view dangerous. If that is the intention of the NPPF & JLP we disagree with the NPPF & JLP.
- 2.4. **ST11, LP22(1)(h):** This appears to be a typo as this section is about heritage
- 2.5. **ST15 LP26(1)(f):** Removes the requirement for homes to be elderly friendly. This goes against the *'fit for life'* principles in an area of the country that is a retirement area (44% of Sproughton parishioners are retired). Homes that as *'fit for life'* is an important element of our emerging Neighbourhood Plan so we object to the removal of this section from Policy LP26.
- 2.6. **ST16, LP29(3):** The fresh water supply is *'under stress'* in East Anglia and significant wildlife habitats tend to lie downstream of most developments. Contamination of water is therefore very important. *'AVOID OR MITIGATE'* risks to water quality seem too weak and unclear a qualifier for such an important issue. With Developers now always arguing in favour of attenuation pools this effectively means that increased or worse water contamination will be discharging into our drainage ditches and rivers. This simply should not happen unless water quality is maintained.
- 2.7. **LP29(7):** Grey-water recycling is completely different from other water efficiency measures and has an important part to play in the reduction of fresh water usage. Implementation of grey-water management e.g for use in watering gardens will reduce the impact on fresh water reserves. We do not understand why this aspiration has been removed.
- 2.8. **ST23, 12.19/SP09(4):** Monitoring of Air Quality at Habitat sites; It is not clear if this includes County Wildlife Sites or the future Sproughton Enterprise Park nature reserve but it should. We would also like to see at least a similar level of concern for human occupation sites
- 2.9. **ST31, LA116:** *Land west of Loraine Way, Sproughton. Site size – 3.4ha. Approximately 50 40 dwellings (with associated infrastructure). To enable greater mitigation of the historic environment.* This allocation was only added to the JLP at the Regulation 19 stage when the only comments invited were those restricted to its Legal Compliance and Soundness. The site was **not** included in the two Public Consultations that preceded the Reg.19 stage so the site was added without public consultation or public examination on the suitability of the site or to gather public opinions. The addition of this site was completely obscured from public knowledge until the Regulation 19 publication. This coincided with the start of a PINS Appeal (appeal refused Dec'20) after the site had been rejected twice by the Babergh Planning Committee (Apr'19 & Apr'20) and is therefore considered undeliverable. It was our view at that time, that what had happened was not a fair or democratic process and not supported by any Public Scrutiny. We were advised that this could be challenged when Regulation 19 JLP was examined by the Government Inspectors but it could not be removed from the JLP at that point. Now, once more, without any general public notice or public consultation the Site allocation has been altered again. We are unsure of the legality of this sequence of events but it does appear to us to be a flagrant disregard of the decisions of the Planning Inspector, Babergh District Council Planning Committee, parishioner opinion and a community right to an open & democratic process. This site has caused significant and disproportionate stress for years not just for the Parish Council, but also for many residents in the village community and we object to yet another manoeuvre to circumvent the overwhelming level of objection to the development of this site by a minor massaging of the figures. With regard to the Site allocation our objections will be raised at Matter 9.

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- 2.10. **ST32 -ST39 /LS01 page 9 & 10:** site changes not directly related to Sproughton. However, note changes have been made and sites removed which we do not understand after being told changes to the Regulation 19 JLP could not be made and that LA116 could not be removed.

2.11. **ST41, Policy SP03 – Settlement Hierarchy**

- 2.11.1. This Policy has been significantly altered from the publicly proposed and consulted policy. Sections 1 & 4 have been removed. Removing at (1) requirements for proportionate and acceptable development standards, infrastructure, respect of natural and historic character of established communities, and the avoidance of coalescence. Removing at (4) requirements for development to be sympathetic with surroundings, sympathetic landscaping, use of hedgerows and planting important in the character of rural development and consideration for cumulative impact.
- 2.11.2. The removal of these sections significantly alters the impact of this JLP re the protection of rural settlements, the surrounding rural areas, countryside and a requirement for any development to be appropriate to the character and history of its location. It was a fundamental policy giving communities & residents confidence that planning policies would give proper and full consideration to the environment the established communities live in. Presented as it is now would undoubtedly have raised significant protest from many quarters had it been proposed during the public Consultation stage and therefore is a failure to follow a proper democratic process of public examination.
- 2.11.2.1. As above this section completely removed.
- 2.11.2.2. States the hierarchy has been created
- 2.11.2.3. Development outside settlement boundaries no longer subject to **EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances and now only subject to limitations of National Policy. NPPF 78 seems to set a clear expectation for local planning policies to be relevant to a rural area. BMSDC is predominantly a rural area and yet has decided not to set a local policy but to defer to National Policy which in itself appears to be a breach of National Policy. Thereby any refusal for countryside development almost anywhere becomes challengeable opening up this rural county to an unrefusable hodgepodge of developments that can destroy the open countryside landscape.
- 2.11.2.4. As above this section completely removed

2.12. **ST43 Policy SP04 – Housing Spatial Distribution**

- 2.12.1. Added comments: *In accordance with national policy, for plan-making, the overall pattern and scale of housing development in the Plan is set out below. However, the settlement hierarchy minimum homes numbers are not to be applied for decision-taking purposes.*
- 2.12.2. On the one hand useful clarification in that it states the numbers are not to be used in decision making. However it refers to minimum homes numbers which appears to be contradictory as numbers contain a 20% buffer. It cannot include a buffer if these are minimum numbers as a buffer is there to absorb shortfalls when changes erode the delivery objective. Also the next paragraph describes the list as a “broad provision”. Then again describes these as minimum numbers in the lists but on next page the sentence stating these are minimum numbers has been deleted. This is all contradictory. The minimum objective should be the numbers before a 20% buffer is added

2.12.3. .

This then goes on to add further comments under neighbourhood Plans whilst similar comments in 9.11 are removed. These require that NP must make provision for the housing numbers proposed. However, this JLP has been compiled by council planning officers and consultants who are trained specialists paid adequately to undertake that task. This JLP has been constructed based on availability, suitability and deliverability of sites. If there is a shortfall because the Districts paid professionals have got it wrong and sites are unavailable, unsuitable or otherwise undeliverable we fail to understand how Parish councils with nothing more than a part time Parish Clerk as a paid

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employee are supposed to make up any shortfall due to their failure especially as the professionals have supposedly already put forward the best or even the only suitable sites

- 2.12.4. **ST44 Table 4:** Whilst reviewing these amendments it became apparent that Sproughton is listed as a Neighbourhood Plan Area with a requirement to provide 1514 homes in table 4. Although we are striving to create a NP with several stand alone professional documents available for planning guidance there is still some distance to go for the actual plan and in all other respects this JLP ignores it.
- So the policies for the site allocations needed to achieve the housing requirement in our Parish ignore our emerging NP with respect to planning standards whilst the requirement to provide housing does not.
- This is rather disproportionate and unfair and we feel that this JLP either recognises the emerging NP in all respects or it does not.
- 2.12.5. **ST45. Para 13,04:** Our position here is exactly the same as in ST15 LP26(1)(f) above. Contrary to BMSDC opinion a significant issue in our NP is Homes For Life. However, whereas this section may be appropriate to remove as not directly related to that policy ST15 LP26(1)(f) should be retained as a general standards policy.
- 2.12.6. **ST46 Policy LP01:** This is rather inconsistent with ST41, Policy SP03 item 3 which appears to have removed any local policy with respect to rural development.
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2.13. Review of BMSDC Document 'Spatial Distribution Statement'

- 2.13.1. **Pg1 1.04:** The criteria here is very selective in only picking 2000-2020. Outside this year range Sproughton has been a major contributor to the housing supply in the district with significant developments in the Hadleigh Road community particularly in the 1980's, the expansion of the village to the South East along Church Lane and more recently with the Wolsey Grange 1 development now being built. These alone will represent an expansion from a village a couple of hundred homes to over 1,000 homes. This has all been done with little or no benefit to the community in terms of social/community infrastructure or facilities or any practical improvements to cope with the increased demands on the parishes road infrastructure. This is already disproportionate high compared to the district without the JLP proposal for another one and a half thousand homes impacting on the existing community and infrastructure again with little or no benefit to the existing community.
- 2.13.2. It is therefore unjust, misleading and quite offensive to hear the inference of this paragraph that Sproughton is part of an area disproportionately contributing low to this rural districts development.
- 2.13.3. **Pg1 1.05/1.06/1.07:** The claim here is for balanced growth but in truth the proposal is for focused growth as the proposed sites are massively out of balance with the size of existing communities. The emphasis is on growth along main transport corridors and providing services in rural areas. This means that communities identified as being close, but not necessarily well connected, to transport corridors are being targeted for growth but without providing a balanced growth in services, facilities and infrastructure.
- 2.13.4. Our own experience is that primary care like GP's, Dentists and proper community facilities like community halls, clubs, sports halls etc are not being incorporated into developments in these growth areas creating substandard communities. There is a reliance on existing infrastructure which is already in many cases overstretched and inadequate. There is no balance if a large development is built near a GP surgery for the provision of primary health care if that surgery is already oversubscribed e.g. Pinewood Surgery. That will either result in new residents having no locally accessible primary care or a deterioration in provision and quality of primary health care for both new residents and existing residents. This is not balanced growth especially when many rural communities have better primary care with more capacity for new patients. This we see regularly as local residents in our proposed high growth area are already having to move to GP & Dental surgeries out in the rural areas outside their catchment area due to overstretched local provision. As

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primary health care is primarily set up by private practices that just receive funding for providing NHS care the present practice of making contributions to local NHS under S106 agreements has no beneficial impact on addressing this issue. At the end of 1.07 it is stated that the Council is satisfied that the settlements where they have allocated growth can accommodate that growth. This is either a pointless statement if it is saying any open field can accommodate a development as development can be engineered to go anywhere. However if it is suggesting that an existing community has infrastructure and facilities to accommodate the growth then this is misleading. Many rural communities have little or no infrastructure but have a close supporting community and facilities are spread between neighbouring communities in most cases providing significantly better services proportionately per person and available capacity than is found in the Ipswich Fringes. In the villages of the Ipswich Fringe this situation is far worse as development over decades has taken place without proportionate growth in services. We would therefore dispute that our settlements are adequately provided with services and infrastructure to accommodate the levels of settlement growth proposed unless it is intended that these will be substandard areas of social and health care.

- 2.13.5. Also, because the proposed growth plans are not linked proportionately to community sizes growth is taking place disproportionately to communities, so it isn't balanced. The children of rural families are unable to stay in their communities due to lack of rural housing forcing them into the proposed transport corridor growth areas. This is pushing rural house prices up within the district and pricing rural families who work the countryside out of their communities. This is disadvantaging existing rural family groups and adversely & disproportionately impacting on the proposed growth areas.
- 2.13.6. **Page 2 Fig 1 and 2:** this is based on a selective time frame that ignores significant levels of growth before 2001. It also clearly defines by the blue areas how progressive and proportionate growth in rural areas is being ignored which will be detrimental to rural communities. Hidden in these maps is the significance of the Gipping Valley which is a recognised area of special landscape with great recreational, social and community value not wholly dissimilar in Landscape Character to the Dedham Vale valley. The A14 roughly followed the Gipping Valley when it was built as did the old Roman Pye Road so all the development proposed along the A14 transport route is also development along the Gipping Valley which will destroy the value of this valley. So much development along the river valley also cumulatively impacts adversely on flood risks to established settlements millennium's old along the river. If every one of these developments is built to the minimum SUDS requirements set today and the almost daily warnings of scientists that requirements are inadequate for the future are correct then the overspill from every one of these developments would be devastating to the established riverside communities downstream.
- 2.13.7. **Page 3 Belstead:** suggested that growth is impractical due to no footpath or school. This makes no sense as footpaths can be built with developments (typically Bennett Homes re Church Lane). In the next parish Copdock & Washbrook, it is suggested that pavements there should be improved and that extra capacity for schooling can be provided by the Wolsey Grange School. So this seems to be double standards and selective arguments which are not fairly applied. If development is promoted at Wolsey Grange to provide a school and Pavements why is it not right that development in Belstead is promoted to provide the missing school and pavements?
- 2.13.8. **Copdock & Washbrook:** As above re schooling, however it is our understanding that Taylor Wimpey are looking to provide a school adequate for their development and not for surrounding villages. We do not believe there is even any intention to absorb the pupils of the present Sproughton school. Then in the column for rational for numbers 'Reason not a higher number? *Limited further SHELAA sites. Significant nearby growth proposals in Capel St Mary, East Bergholt and Sproughton. Potential cumulative impact of additional growth upon nearby A12/A14 Copdock Interchange and Ipswich AQMA.* So B&MSDC are using the argument that because they want to build lots of houses in Sproughton the cumulative impact would be too great. Why not the other way round?
- 2.13.9. **Sproughton:** Existing Education Facility can accommodate additional capacity in Catchment area? We disagree. Our understanding was that Sproughton Primary School was struggling to accommodate our own Parish and some Sproughton children were going elsewhere? If the

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reference is to Senior schools etc then we have none and surely that argument would apply to all the local parishes. As for the Wolsey Grange school it still isn't being built, and our understanding is that Taylor Wimpey only intend to make provision for pupils from its own development. Re the provision of additional health facilities. So far the closest Taylor Wimpey have come to that is suggesting that there are good links to Hawthorn Drive Surgery but that is oversubscribed. They have listened to other suggestions but done nothing to pursue them. The other possibility would be the community building on the Pigeon Site but that won't happen without other funding or investment – we are uncertain of Pigeon's willingness to provide community facilities at this point.

- 2.13.10. **Wherstead:** Although this Parish has no primary school it is perhaps better situated than Sproughton, not reliant on the Copdock interchange and overcrowded London Road access route into Ipswich with some very attractive facilities like the Suffolk Food Hall, Yacht Marina, Ski Slope and an attractive employment area. The primary reason that this Parish is not being promoted is because this JLP is availability led rather than facility & need lead. The Ipswich Policy Area development group are promoting development along the Gipping Valley without any public consultation. That is why most of the development sites that have come forward are along the Gipping Valley/A14 corridor clearly shown by the development heat map.