

# Ashby Herringfleet and Somerleyton Parish Council

## Response to First Draft Local Plan Consultation

Parish Councillors have consulted widely and have also held an open meeting to gauge opinion of the First Draft Local Plan. At the Parish Council meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> September it was resolved to respond to the consultation as follows:

The Parish Council broadly supports the concept of the Rural Strategy delivering 12% of the necessary housing. However it has concerns about the number of homes allocated to Somerleyton within the Plan period, as shown below.

**Policy WLP7.5** The Parish Council agrees, in principle, with all of the points in this Policy and it makes the following comments:

- The number of dwellings proposed for this site is probably too many because the First Draft Local Plan does not show the proposal to convert the old Forge Garage office at the front of the site into a shop. If the remainder of the site (to the North and West of the old Forge) is developed at the suggested 15 dwellings per hectare there will probably be fewer than 10 dwellings, which is acceptable.
- As the site is quite small and enclosed the maximum number of bedrooms per dwelling should be 3.
- Having regard to the quality of the surroundings of this site a design code/brief should be prepared for the site either as part of a Neighbourhood Plan or as a Supplementary Planning Document. No development should be permitted on the site until the design code/brief has been prepared.

**Policy WLP7.6** The Parish Council agrees in principle that housing development in this area would be appropriate and welcomes, in general, the site specific conditions but it wishes the proposal to be amended as follows:

- The proposal for 45 dwellings is excessive because this would be a very large percentage increase in the number of dwellings in the village in a very short period of time. Only the field currently farmed should be developed and the two small fields to the East should not be developed as part of this Local Plan, although the specification for at least 0.5 hectare of open land at the North of the site should be retained.
- The density of the development should be 15 dwellings per hectare rather than the suggested 18 to better reflect the general density within the village.
- Policy WLP8.2 would require that 35% of the dwellings on this site should be affordable housing. Given the shortage of social housing in the parishes this allocation should be strictly adhered to on this site with no trade-offs under the terms of WLP8.2 permitted.

Overall, the proposal to add 55 dwellings on two sites to the village within the relatively short period of the remainder of the Draft Plan (18 years) is excessive. However, if the number is reduced as shown above and the indicated development dates shown in the First Draft Local Plan are adhered to with the Land North of The Street being developed before the Mill Farm Field then the village should be able to absorb the new dwellings.

Further to its email correspondence with Sam Hubbard on 22<sup>nd</sup> August the Parish Council remains concerned at the ability of the Primary School to cope with the additional children brought by these new housing developments. The School currently has 64 pupils despite a stated capacity of 56 but we note that the Education Authority is content that by the time the housing developments are complete it will be able to provide the necessary places. It will be necessary to maintain close contact with the Education Authority during the development of the two sites to ensure that this remains the case.

Given the character and quality of the village and that one site is within the Conservation Area and the other adjacent to it the Parish Council believes that WDC must demonstrate in action its commitment to outstanding design when considering applications for planning permission for both these sites.