

5 Pump Cottages  
Main Road  
Theberton  
Suffolk  
IP16 4RA

16<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Planning Policy & Delivery Team  
East Suffolk House  
Station Road, Melton  
Woodbridge  
IP12 1RT

Dear Sirs

### **Local Plan Review**

We thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation and for the helpful briefing by your colleagues, Mr Brown and Ms Mundy. Our observations relate to our own village, but some general principles will be applicable to other villages in the area.

### **General Options for Housing Distribution**

We note that you offer three options:

- Option 4 - Continuation of the Existing Approach
- Option 5 – Focus on Ipswich and A14 Transport Corridor
- Option 6 – A12 transport Corridor and Dispersed Rural Focus

We favour options 4 or 5. The rural areas and A12 Corridor simply do not have the infrastructure to support the scale of development envisaged. Neither do they have the employment opportunities.

### **What does Middleton need?**

In attractive villages, like Middleton, smaller houses (old or new) that come on to the market mainly go for second homes or holiday homes. Such properties are unsuitable for families. And they are unaffordable for the local singles or couples with urgent housing needs, namely: youngsters, the disabled and elderly.

Larger properties are unaffordable for local people with families who need them and they tend to go to retirees from outside the area, reinforcing the elderly demographic.

Job opportunities in the local area are scarce and largely limited to: hospitality (often seasonal); retail; teaching; healthcare; construction; and building or garden maintenance.

We do not need any more market houses. But we do have a real need for more affordable homes. To this end we are pursuing an exception site development of six affordable and two market properties on land in Back Road.

Moreover, with such an ageing population, the wider area needs specialist sheltered housing allied to care facilities of the kind that has just secured consent on appeal at Norwood House. Although developments of this type do not count directly towards housing targets, they do free up housing elsewhere in the area – rather than import distant second-home buyers or retirees.

In terms of absolute numbers, the existing Site Allocations document stated that Middleton needed 5-10 more units in the period to 2027. Since the start of the plan period, 11 new homes have been built in the village and there are outstanding consents for a further three.

Moreover, Hastoe are in advanced negotiations with the County to acquire the exception site described above for a further eight homes. And, with our support, the 14 sheltered units will soon be under construction at Norwood House.

The village has more than done its bit. Accordingly, exceptions excepted, no more market homes should be developed in the village over the plan period. As we have said before, enough is enough.

### **Individual Sites Identified in the Plan**

We believe that none of the sites you have identified on the map of Middleton is suitable for (further) development. We set out a summary of our reasons below. (Identification numbers are as shown on the plan in the consultation document.)

**484** is in open countryside, well out of the village and is unsustainable by any reckoning.

**961** lies at the periphery of the built up area, but fronts a single-track road, which already suffers from congestion.

**155** is a small piece of backland, totally unsuitable for development.

**47** is not suitable. Access is poor. Title Road would need to be widened and the junction with Mill St improved. We understand Highways have had reservations - and we doubt whether a workable solution could be achieved. Moreover the plot is much higher than Mill St and we are concerned that any new properties would directly overlook the cottages to

the north. In the recent past, the cottages at the east end of Mill St have been flooded by surface water run-off down Title Road and adjoining land. Any development of Plot 47 would exacerbate this problem and be a real concern to the occupants of the affected properties.

**243** already has consent for a single dwelling.

**1043** has had two applications refused in the past five years. The reasons for refusal were legion. But our principal concern is access. Whatever the Suffolk County Highways people may say, we do not believe that the access to the site via Back Road, as proposed by the developer, is acceptable. Even with improvements, it will still have a pinch point between the house and the embankment near the crossroads, where visibility is already poor and where even pedestrians struggle to get past cars. Moreover, a high hard retaining wall, as proposed, in lieu of the present grassed embankment, will be completely at odds with the aesthetics and character of the village.

**406** is not suitable for general housing development. It offers views over open countryside, which helps delineate the village and fronts a busy single-track road. However, as we have discussed previously, we can see scope for a limited development of mainly affordable housing as an exception site. The development would be at the eastern end of the plot and entail widening of a short stretch of Back Road to its junction with Rectory Road.

**348** has considerable ecological and landscape value and is liable to flood. It is simply a non-starter.

We trust that the above is sufficient for your purposes for the time being. But if you need further clarification or explanation, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

MRS L J LEEK  
PARISH CLERK