

**Planning Issues – BAPTC/BDC on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

<b>Attendees - BAPTC</b>	<b>Attendees - Babergh</b>
Beryl Calver (Pinewood), Peter Eaton (Hintlesham & Chattisham), John Foster (Sproughton) Helen Davies (Sproughton) Andrew Searle (Lavenham) Michael Bamford (Bentley) Andrew Guttridge (Bildeston)	Jonathan Stephenson – Strategic Director Kathy Nixon – Strategic Director Tom Barker – AD Planning for Growth Arthur Charvonia - CEO

**QUESTIONS EMAILED TO BDC PRIOR TO THE MEETING**

1. **Understanding and interpreting the evidence base**
  - a. Implications of Government guidance on housing requirement e.g. impact of house price adjustment + Planning for the right homes
  - b. Update position on five-year land supply – when will full data be available?
  - c. How are the Brett Associate’s caveats on potential data changes (due to revised data from its national sources) being accommodated?
  - d. What was the impact of Sajid Javid’s three-stage approach to assessing housing need – (Sept 2017):
  - e. “The existing system for determining [housing demand] simply isn’t good enough... carried out by expensive consultants using their own methodology. The result is an opaque mishmash of different figures that are consistent only in their complexity.”
2. Alternative scenarios for overall plan – were any scoped?
3. Spatial distribution – rationale justification – what alternatives considered?
4. Exactly how would a DC merger impact the five-year supply and housing need?
5. What is the average build-out rate by size and type of development?
6. Why are build out rates for Babergh and Mid Suffolk so dissimilar?
7. What information is there for Government introducing ‘use it or lose it’ policies?
8. What is the total number of properties if all sites on JLP adopted?
9. How will neighbourhood planning data be integrated into JLP and what further encouragement will be given to parishes to develop neighbourhood plans?
10. What guidance is given to planning committee members on how limitations of local infrastructure should be assessed e.g. availability of school places?

**NOTES FROM THE MEETING: PLANNING**

1. **Planning Issues**
  - a. **How is the JLP going?:** BDC have had 14,000 responses to date. The Housing questions received a lot of feedback as did Boundaries, 1000 response on landscape. A number of professional bodies have responded e.g. The Housebuilders Association. The ‘Northern route’ is coming back into play. NPPF standard methodology has been used for housing need which has increased the numbers. The new NPPF is due to be introduced shortly. *[Post meeting note: the new NPPF was published on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018.]*

- a. **Working with the Community:** PI asked why BDC did not work with the communities more? For example East Bergholt Community Land initiative has land available for inclusion in the JLP but it was not accepted. BDC stated there is money available to promote community land trust initiatives to develop new housing.
- b. **Affordable Housing:** The group felt that BDC should stick to their mandated 35% for affordable housing and not reduce it when developers plead poverty. This seems to happen frequently. Presumably the development was viable at the start otherwise the initial application would not have passed review by the Planning Team. It is difficult to understand why a proposed development is less viable just a few weeks after the initial application has been passed. *TB encouraged people to read the Councils Annual Monitoring Report which showed how successful the Councils have been achieving a high percentage of affordable housing across the range of development. The Council is also building new affordable housing itself and buying new stock on other new developments.*
- a. **Viability:** This should be an industry standard calculation - RICS principles should be followed (Action: TB to send calculation to HD). Developers do come to BDC with viability calculations as part of initial site discussions – the working assumption is that there should be 20% profit overall on a particular development. It was suggested that BDC introduce 'Open Book' viability assessment so that it is easier for consultees (including Parish/Town Councils) to understand the background to a proposed development and understand any statements on the viability of affordable housing or otherwise. TB would like to introduce this, but legally difficult. The group felt this would be a useful step in the process. *[Post-meeting note: viability is now dealt with in the new NPPF published in July 2018 available on the .gov.uk website.]*
- c. **Smaller Builders v Big Developers:** HD suggested encouraging the smaller builders; developers like the larger sites but don't seem to build the houses in a timely manner. The group pointed out that there are fewer smaller builders since the crash, BDC should be encouraging smaller builders in the JLP. *BDC agreed that there are a range of benefits to the local economy when a good proportion of development is provided by smaller builders. The Councils' Joint Strategic Plan describes encouraging more smaller builders as an objective and all options are being considered through the Joint Local Plan and the Councils Housing Strategy.* BDC intend to build 200+ houses themselves.
- d. **Under delivery of houses:** The 'use it or lose it' clause didn't make it thru into the white paper. How do BDC encourage people to build? The group suggested a financial penalty be included in the conditions of a planning application. HMS Ganges<sup>1</sup> was mixed use but not viable – they did bid for money for a government scheme to try to make it possible but didn't get it. BDC are trying to work out ways to encourage builders to build but minimal ways to do this. Can BDC get together with other DCs and their MPs to lobby the government? *[Post meeting note: Delivery has increased and 331 homes were provided in Babergh during 2017/18. Babergh also announced a five-year housing land supply of 6.5 years in July 2018.]*
- e. **Ipswich Fringe:** BDC are working with IBC on this. HD pointed out that fringe parishes felt they would be absorbed into Ipswich which was not what they wanted – how would BDC address this? TB felt that Ipswich had two choices – to go up or to go out, felt the latter was more probable. Lavenham (Carroll Reeve) have sent a paper to Tom re densification.
- f. **Infrastructure:** HD pointed out that medical facilities were already stretched in Pinewood yet BDC proposed building Wolsey Grange with plans to extend the development down

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<sup>1</sup> HMS Ganges development at Shotley Gate

Chantry Vale. How are they going to find the doctors to support the population when existing surgeries are already over-subscribed with patients and undersubscribed with doctors. TB responded that the NHS are a statutory consultee. BDC have to believe the NHS if they say OK it can be mitigated. Unfortunately this does not solve the problem as the NHS are not dealing with the problem on the ground as are the local GPs.

- g. **Brownfield Sites:** PE suggested that BDC create a list of available brownfield sites for developers. List to date below.

Site	Site
Stowmarket Middle School, Walnut Tree Walk, IP141JP	Anchor Storage, Eye Road, Kenton, IP146JJ
Needham Market Middle School, School Street, IP68BB	Land South of Gipping Road, Great Blakenham
Mid Suffolk Council Car Park, Hurstlea Road, IP68DL	Paddock House, Wellington Street, Eye, IP237BE
Council Depot, Creting Road West, Stowmarket, IP145AT	Garages, Claypits Avenue, Bures St Mary
Mid Suffolk District Council Offices, 131 High Street, Needham Market	Angel Court, Angel Street, Hadleigh
Land north of Gipping Road, West of railway line, Great Blakenham	Babergh Council Offices, Corks Lane, Hadleigh
Council Depot, Great Wenham	

### SUBSEQUENT FOLLOW-UP

Email sent to BDC (Jonathan Stephenson) on 17Mar18 containing list of actions as follows:-

1. Provide BDC organization chart to BAPTC – JS/KN
2. Establish direct route for communication of questions raised by BAPTC members (inc. directing the request to the correct person & facilitating the response), including those that might previously have resulted in FoI requests - JS to be initial point of contact for HD.
3. Agenda for the Parish Liaison Meetings to be decided equally between parishes and DCs – JS
4. Consideration to be given to facilitating smaller 'break-out' groups at Parish Liaison Meeting on specific topics, this should encourage more participation from members – JS to progress.
5. Investigate possible sub-contracting of merger survey and potential impact on quality of results; BAPTC concerns about survey protocol to be relayed to relevant officers and councilors – JS/KN.
6. JS/KN will implement changes to format of communications with parishes, giving full consideration to the need for:
  - a. Appropriate advance notice (e.g. to assist parishes that meet bi-monthly)
  - b. Provision of clear timelines
  - c. Supporting data to be made available to those who are interested and to flag up means of access.
  - d. Review of 'confidential' reports to see whether redacted copies could be made available.
7. JS/KN to discuss BAPTC request for further discussion of key draft JLP issues with planning team prior to completion of next draft and report outcome to HD. BAPTC, as the

representative body of Parish and Town Councils in Babergh, also requests explanations of the DCs' initial response to consultation submissions (by topic, not on an individual basis).

8. BAPTC will consult with members and provide feedback on BDC arrangements for local contact, in light of move to Endeavour House – HD.

Please keep us updated on progress – an initial update before Easter, even if it is only 'all actions initiated' would be helpful, with another update at the end of April.

Response from JS was that he would come back to us with an update on the actions.

**CURRENT STATUS (NOV'18)**

No further updates from Babergh