

# WORLINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



*Dear Resident,*

It's now some years when the Neighbourhood Planning team began work on the Neighbourhood Plan for Worlingham. The Parish Council began deliberations surrounding neighbourhood planning in 2014. The team broadened with both resident and parish council members in January 2016. We carried out a parish questionnaire in November 2016, completed a Housing Needs Assessment in February 2017, held a drop-in day in May 2017 and drafted an outline neighbourhood plan in early June 2017. We have spent many long hours working on this but we believe we have been remiss in not keeping residents informed of developments, thus the information below will bring you right up to date.

You may remember we held various open meetings when residents had the opportunity to write their comments and add them to the various A-frame boards. From the comments made, the team formulated the 22 page, 61- question questionnaire which was subsequently hand delivered to every dwelling in the village for all residents over the age of 11 to make their comments, either by completing the form on line or to be collected from your home by volunteers. Happily around 1000 residents completed the questionnaire and this enabled the team to formulate a framework NP to be submitted to Waveney."

For those that aren't aware, the government have said that if communities have a NP in place they would be able to have input into what goes where. Without a plan, development would still happen but you wouldn't be able to influence the decisions made. You will have probably noted that NPs are emerging all over the country.

Once all the questionnaires were completed and collected, the information was collated into a document for sending to Waveney D.C. The results of the questionnaire were laid out for inspection by the community during the drop-in day on 26 May 2017 (held in the sports hall of the local primary school).

On hearing about Waveney's emerging Local Plan, we quickly submitted the framework NP to Waveney who informed us that should our plan not fit in with their emerging Local Plan, they would reject it. As you can imagine this rather took the wind out of our sails and for some time we have been considering how we go forward.

Whilst we had been working on our NP one of our members spent a huge amount of time working on a full Housing Needs Assessment and discovered that during the

period 2001 to 2011, the number of dwellings in Worlingham increased by 13.5% whilst that in Waveney as a whole increased by around 6 %. Based on this 2017 Housing Needs Assessment, we proposed around 300 new dwellings could be justified for the period 2011 to 2036. Of these, around 24 so-called windfall homes were already either built or approved for building.

You can imagine our surprise therefore when Waveney published its draft New Local Plan that came up with 1250 homes for Worlingham and Beccles across the whole of the southern boundary from the Ellough to the London road (referred to as the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood). Of these, 1,055 are to be built by the end of the new Local Plan period in 2036. This, by the way, does not include the approximately 280 homes already earmarked for the west of the London road (in Beccles).

We did point out to Waveney the result of our Housing Needs Assessment but to no avail. The government's planning regulations determine the way councils must derive housing needs. Waveney D.C. has designated its new housing allocations across the District as Strategic policies, which means these policies take precedence over any that are wanted locally. Incidentally, the likely developers have argued against Waveney's plans saying that more homes should be allocated to Worlingham and Beccles than has been suggested so therefore even the 1250 is being argued against.

At the end of last year, Waveney submitted their finalised New Local Plan to the public enquiry (which we attended) and happily some of the inspectors comments were in sympathy with our (and residents') views. As we are unable to contest the number of new homes, we are seeking to influence the intended Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood's details so that the identity of Worlingham is retained rather than have the risk of it being subsumed into that of Beccles. The outputs from the 2016 village questionnaire and the objective needs concerning housing types identified in the 2017 Housing Needs Assessment combine to form the principles underpinning the issues we are arguing to be taken into account during the coming planning stages.

We still do not know the final number of new homes that are to be built within the boundaries of Worlingham as part of the Garden Neighbourhood development. If it were to be around 500, that alone would constitute a parish growth of 31% (ignoring other windfall growth) by 2036.

A parish-council commissioned study into the potential traffic problems arising from the proposed housing development in Beccles and Worlingham has been assessed and dismissed by Suffolk County Council.

We are now at the stage of making sure our views are taken into account and not just paid lip service to and we have recently forwarded these comments to Waveney.

We still have more to do but unfortunately our team has reduced in number which put more pressure on those remaining. If you feel you would like to become involved, contact Lesley Beevor at Worlingham Parish Council, [worlinghampc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:worlinghampc@hotmail.co.uk).