

Draft Local Development Framework (LDF) consultation response from Bredfield Parish Council.

Bredfield Parish Council has carried out a thorough Draft LDF consultation with parishioners. This has included a public parish plan meeting, a public meeting specifically to encourage comment from the community and a Parish Council meeting to summary the responses and endorse a report.

Four elements of the LDF specifically relevant to Bredfield have been considered:

1. The proposal for a new settlement hierarchy and was the new proposal suitable?
2. Where would Bredfield fit in the hierarchy and was SCDC's positioning of Bredfield as a Local Service Centre correct?
3. The Physical Limits Boundary for Bredfield and should it be changed?
4. Site Specific proposals and whether they were suitable for development?

1) The settlement hierarchy seems a workable process, the new approach, based on facilities rather than sheer size, is more logical. It should lead to a more sustainable plan. Hopefully, SCDC will be able to use this to lobby and support the retention of those facilities which are not within its own control (eg post offices and pubs). Development Control Policy DC34 will be crucial to this approach.

2) Bredfield's position as a Local Service Centre seems correct and a general feeling is that the designation should not be any lower in the hierarchy. The population is too small to aspire to Key Centre status. The scale of development envisaged is in accordance with the aspirations of the Parish Plan.

- The village has a fairly regular public transport to Woodbridge, and a journey-to-work service to Ipswich.
- The Community shop meets everyday needs, but there has been no Post Office since 1986.
- The Village Hall, and Bowls Clubhouse provide meeting places, soon to be augmented by the St Andrew's Room next to the Church.
- The Castle Pub is currently closed and for sale. It is to be hoped that it will re-open when trading conditions improve. Conversion to residential use would be resisted.
- There is some local employment: the Parish Plan Business survey in 2006 was completed by 13 businesses, providing 19 full-time and 13 part-time jobs.

3) The community feels that growth is needed and that some easing of the physical limits to provide new sites was potentially better than concentrated infill. Some consensus has been reached over the Physical Limits Boundary. Bearing in mind the scale of development required. (Ten percent increase in housing was agreed and is adequate based upon SCDC housing supply proposals for 2008 – 2025). By 2025, only minor adjustments to the boundary are required.

- One area, Caters Road, was suggested as both a new area within a PLB or as a conservation area, however the parish council feel that further consultation with the residents is required before considering any change in the areas status.
- The changing of physical limits to include all of a property were generally supported.
- The inclusion of land next to the village hall and bowls club within the PLB is widely supported.
- The linking of the two current zones of the village is supported but only as so much as it included where development already exists.
- Further development at the southern end of the village was discussed at both the Parish Council and the LDF public meeting. The notion that part of this field (GR) could be developed as low-cost or affordable housing was agreed by the Parish Council. However the Council were unhappy about development of the whole of the field.
- Green space and areas where development should be resisted have also been highlighted. It was considered that these were important areas both environmentally and for the character of the village.

All changes discussed and agreed are mapped and attached to the master copy of this report.

4) Only one site specific proposal has been put forward in Bredfield, proposal 521, land opposite Little Orchard, Woodbridge Road, Bredfield. This is OS 7658, a 0.82 ha rough pasture. It is put forward by the owner as being “ideally suited with some potential for either a terrace of low-cost housing or alternatively for construction of some Almshouses to house the elderly in the village and surrounding area”.

The site is outside the present Physical Limits Boundary, and is separated from it by a small copse which has been highlighted in the Parish Plan as important in the local landscape and worthy of protection for its wildlife value. The Parish Plan also stated that these fields, which form a break between the Pump end and the main part of the village, should be preserved.

This site is therefore not suitable for development. It would be far better to re-instate the allotments as working allotments which were previously located on the adjoining field.

Measured against the Assessment Criteria:

- Scores favourably as being within a Local Service Centre.
- Very unfavourably as a greenfield site outside of existing physical limits boundaries.
- Site is too large – development over 0.25 ha is considered inappropriate in local service centres.
- It would set a precedent for further development between the existing built-up areas of the village.
- Susceptible to flooding with a potential to exacerbate downstream flooding by increasing run off.
- It would detract from the visual amenity, and impact on a woodland area which significant in the local landscape and a wildlife haven.

- It is adjacent to a public right of way.
- The public meeting rejected this site unanimously for development.

The Parish Council have also made generally comment on the body, strategy and policy of the Draft LDF:

We presume that SCDC will pick up their own “typos”. eg P 10, para 9 – the Regional Spatial Strategy runs to 2021, not 2001!

Para 1.05. The proportion of homes in the District not meeting the Decent Homes Standard (26.1%) is alarming, but there is no definition of this standard.

Para 1.10 Key Housing Issues – agree these priorities.

Parish Plan asked about housing need, but only 6% of households had a member in need of alternative accommodation, so this issue was not taken forward as an action point.

Para 1.19 wording of issue (ix) is ambiguous. It reads as if the Strategy seeks to **increase or encourage** lorry movements on rural roads, whereas the opposite is required. Better to say “A concern **about** “

Para 1.26

Issue (ii) has the same ambiguous wording as Para 1.19 above.

Issue (iii) ought to include the single-carriageway section of the A12 from Woods Lane to the Wickham Market bypass. *Parish Plan highlighted this as a danger point of great concern to Bredfield residents.*

The side-effects of “Operation Stack” on roads and communities outside the Port of Felixstowe ought to be included as a Key Transport Issue.

Para 1.40 Lack of access to services was highlighted in Parish Plan. Recent Post Office closures have made the situation worse, as the Sub-postmaster’s salary was often helping to support the only shop in a village. SCDC can help by supporting community shop ventures, as it has already done in Bredfield. In the market towns, pedestrianisation has made many of the remaining Post Offices and Banks inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties. SCDC must be prepared to act positively to assist wherever possible, and to resist the closure of those POs and banks which are accessible.

Para 1.45 The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies key issues which are important for the well-being of our local community in Bredfield.

Para 2.05 It is hoped that the impending Boundary Commission proposals for local government will not separate these Growth Points from the rural hinterland they currently support.

Para 2.17 How will SCDC assist communities to tackle these issues? Paras 4.83-89 address this to a certain extent, but don’t explain how SCDC can help communities to help themselves.

Para 2.18 Provision of housing to meet local needs must be done in tandem with measures to restrict second home ownership. In Bredfield, the need is for houses to purchase by first-time buyers and “down-sizers”.

Para 2.20 There is a potential conflict between the encouragement of local employment and the need to restrict lorry movements in rural areas. This is acknowledged in 2.26.

Para 2.31 Market town viability is not enhanced by excessive car parking restrictions (including high costs). In a period of recession, they are going to need all the help they can get to compete with out-of-town centres.

Para 2.53 What on earth does “connectivity” mean?

Section 3. THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

Strategic Policy SP1 is crucial to the whole future of the District.

SP10 Woodbridge

Policies for the town centre need to recognise the need to park, and disabled access. Currently buses do not go close enough to the Thorofare for people with poor mobility.

SP11 Key and Local Service Centres

(b) “modest growth” within the PLB is what our Parish Plan calls for. There appears to be no demand from current residents for housing to rent at the present time, although respondents asked for any new housing to be for young people and small family homes.
(d) what are the “defined criteria” for allowing development within “clusters” adjacent to the PLB?. Are small groups of houses outside the PLB (eg Caters Road) a cluster where organic development might be permitted?

(e) Access to key service centres from the smaller settlements is often very limited. There may be a bus in one direction, but no return service.

Table 1. The Exceptions listed for the Countryside should equally apply to “Other Villages”. Expansion of businesses in Local Service Centres should have regard to the traffic HG) generation.

Transport Provision

Differential standards of parking provision are likely to lead to considerable confusion and appeals!

Better co-ordination of bus and rail timetables is needed, despite the difficulties of achieving this with deregulated services.

SP14:

Connectivity is a horrible word! Better interchange facilities are needed at Woodbridge Station.

3.132 & SP15

The single carriageway stretch of the A12 between Woods Lane and the Wickham Market bypass also needs upgrading, and safer provision made for traffic turning right from the C309 which is the major access to Woodbridge from several villages. The only

alternative is to “rat-run” through very narrow lanes to reach the B1079 and the Wyevale roundabout.

Another key issue related to the A14 is arrangements made for lorry parking during Port closures - Operation Stack. In addition to the provision of off-road parking in the Felixstowe area, SCDC should press for more advance warning notices on the A14, A1 and A12, so that lorries can stop before they reach Suffolk, and other Felixstowe-bound traffic is not seriously impeded.

Retail Centres & SP25

The current downturn in the economy makes it even more important to maintain the viability of the Market Towns. People have to be encouraged to use their local town by making it more accessible by public transport and by car, otherwise they will just bypass it and head for the out-of-town centres around Ipswich.

Access to services

Social exclusion is recognised as a major challenge. This has been made even worse by the closure of rural post offices.

Our Parish Plan also highlighted the problem of isolation of young people in the rural areas. Many villages are too small to support their own youth facilities. Better transport to larger centres, late buses from high schools, and a continuation of SCDC’s very good out-reach holiday sports schemes should be encouraged.

But access for the elderly and the physically disabled seems to be a factor which has not been addressed in the document.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES

DC3 Retention of small dwellings

I believe that a similar blanket policy proposed for Babergh was found to be unworkable. Although a condition imposed on new development might be acceptable, in fairness to existing owners it should not be retrospective. For generations, extension of existing homes has been the norm.

DC4 Housing in the Countryside

It should not be the case that replacement of dwellings is more acceptable than sympathetic extension of the original building.

DC5 Housing in Clusters

This is appropriate to the parts of Bredfield which are not within the current PLB. The policy as formulated is better than the alternative option.

DC7 Residential Annexes

An interesting solution to an increasing problem of care of elderly family members.

DC8 Infilling and Backland Development

Agreed that this type of development accounts for a significant proportion of windfall residential development, particularly in the towns . BUT in villages with tightly drawn PLBs, it is most important to prevent cramped development, and to respect the character of the surrounding area. This is particularly so in villages where mid-20th century council (and other) housing has traditionally had very long back gardens, which will become increasingly valuable again for vegetable growing. There is no indication of what represents a “reasonable size curtilage”

DC9 Extensions to Residential Curtilages

A condition preventing the removal of boundary hedgerows is important: some of these are ancient boundaries, important for historical reasons as well as for their wildlife value. Note must be taken of the hedgerow surveys carried out in many parishes in the District, as well as of Parish Plans. Where an ancient boundary is concerned, conditions should be imposed to restrict buildings such as sheds or greenhouses on the extended area.

DC12 Warehousing & Storage

We are well aware of the environmental problems caused by HGVs on unsuitable roads. The policy needs to make it very clear that ONLY local distribution is acceptable on C class roads. Perhaps this policy could be extended to cover locations for the keeping of goods vehicles and trailers, licensed by the Traffic Commissioners.

DC17 Farm Shops

Retail sales should not be restricted to food. Many farm shops provide the only outlet for small local producers of non-food goods such as greetings cards and toiletries. Such outlets are a cost-effective means of supporting the rural economy.

DC34 Key Facilities

Policy should spell out the need for liason with the local community over retention of facilities.

DC35 Public Buildings

Owners of redundant public buildings are often in a cleft stick, with a duty in law to obtain the best price for the building. But every effort should be made to retain community use if possible. The District Council can very often play a role in facilitating this.