

Planning policies relevant to our Parishes.

Policy HOU 04 – Villages with Boundaries

Appropriate development will be allowed immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, subject to being supported by other policies within the development plan* and where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The development is of an appropriate scale and design to the settlement.
 2. It would not lead to the number of dwellings in the settlement increasing by significantly more than 5% from the date of adoption of the Plan. The settlement refers to the number of dwellings inside the defined settlement boundary.
 3. The design contributes to preserving, and where possible enhancing, the historic nature and connectivity of communities; and
 4. The development avoids coalescence of settlements.
- Opportunities for self-build dwellings which meet the criteria set out above will be supported.

*with the exception of Policy GEN 05 Settlement Boundaries

1 Reasoned Justification

3.18 In line with the Spatial Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy, the level of new development permitted in settlements defined in the policy will be restricted, consistent with the rural character of these villages and reflective of the more limited-service provision and infrastructure available.

3.19 Development which facilitates self-build dwellings will be considered favourably, subject to meeting the criteria set out within the policy.

3.20 As per Criterion 2, growth in each settlement should not lead to the number of dwellings in the settlement increasing by significantly more than 5% from the date of adoption of the plan. Appendix 5 sets out the detailed methodology regarding the calculation of this 5% increase and provides a table, which sets out the number of new dwellings for each settlement.

3.21 Planning applications will be expected to be accompanied by a supporting statement. The supporting statement will be treated as any other planning application document and subject to publication. The statement will seek to address the following key areas:

Justification that the applicant can demonstrate to the Council that the proposal is of appropriate scale and design.

3.22 Proposals must be of a size, design and scale that seek to meet an identified need and respects the setting. Careful siting, massing, use of surrounding landscape features and screening are important as is the enhancement of existing local characteristics. The statement should demonstrate how the site is connected to the surrounding settlement. In areas of greater landscape visibility sensitive design and landscaping is particularly important. The Council's development management service will be able to provide further guidance and comment on emerging schemes.

Policy HOU 05 - Small Villages and Hamlets Outside of Settlement Boundaries

Development in smaller villages and hamlets outside of defined settlement boundaries will be limited, apart from where it would comply with other policies within the development plan* and if all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The development comprises of sensitive infilling and rounding off of a cluster of dwellings with access to an existing highway.
2. It is of an appropriate scale and design to the settlement.
3. The design contributes to enhancing the historic nature and connectivity of communities; and
4. The proposal does not harm or undermine a visually important gap that contributes to the character and distinctiveness of the rural scene.

Opportunities for self-build dwellings which meet the criteria set out above will be supported.

Farmsteads and sporadic small-scale groups of dwellings are considered as lying in the open countryside and are not classed as small villages and hamlets. These, and isolated locations in the countryside, are unlikely to be considered acceptable.

*with the exception of Policy GEN 05 Settlement Boundaries

Reasoned Justification

3.23 Breckland is a large, rural district which contains a high number of small villages and hamlets with little or no service provision. For those areas with 2 or fewer of the services / facilities, settlement boundaries have been removed on the basis that this limits development in locations where it is unsustainable for additional growth. However, having regard to local distinctiveness, it must be recognised that in areas outside of the settlement hierarchy, i.e. the areas regarded as open countryside, there are living and working communities whose social and economic viability must be addressed.

3.24 Policy HOU 05 seeks to address the development needs of these communities whilst minimising the impact on the countryside by allowing clearly identified and evidenced appropriate small-scale development to meet local needs through criteria-based policy. Development will be carefully managed in line with this policy in a manner which is more restrictive than for those named settlements with boundaries.

3.25 Planning applications will be expected to be accompanied by a supporting statement. The supporting statement will be treated as any other planning application document and subject to publication. The statement will seek to address the following key areas:

3Justification that the proposal represents either infill or rounding off.

3.26 Infill is defined as: building taking place on a vacant plot in an otherwise built-up street frontage.

3.27 To be considered infill, a development will generally have built development along the road on either side of the site and be similar to adjacent properties in terms of its visual impact, plot size, dwelling size, floor levels and scale.

3.28 Rounding off is defined as: the completion of an incomplete group of buildings on land which is already partially developed and in such a way which will either

complete the local road pattern or define and complete the boundaries of the group. Such rounding off should not change or distort the character or tradition of the group or the settlement in any undesirable way.

3.29 To be considered as rounding off the statement must address:

- ☐ Whether the perimeter of the site is already built up;
- ☐ Whether development would represent an outward expansion of the settlement;
- ☐ The strength and durability of boundary features to the open countryside; and
- ☐ The relationship with the existing settlement in terms of size, scale and density and its impact on local views.

3.30 It is important to note that not all sites which satisfy the above definitions of infill and rounding off will be suitable for development. Other factors which may affect the impacts of new dwellings include highways and access, landscape, flood risk, biodiversity, impacts on the SPA and impact on built heritage such as listed buildings and these, and other material considerations remain as part of the assessment process.

4 Principles of New Housing

3.31 It is important to consider, as set out in national planning policy, the needs of different groups within the community. This is to ensure that the right size and type of new homes is provided across the District to meet the needs of existing and future residents and to ensure the creation of mixed and balanced communities. This includes those with specialist housing requirements and those who wish to build their own homes.

3.32 The revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) sets out the type and size of new housing needed both across the Central Norfolk SHMA area and within the district over the plan period. However, there is a need to consider the appropriate location and the type and size of properties to be provided in different areas. The Locational Strategy defines the settlement hierarchy, whose purpose is to deliver sustainable development across the district in line with the Vision and Strategic Objectives. In particular:

Development in the Right Place

1. Contribute to sustainable development through the reflection of the vision and aspirations of the local communities for Breckland;
2. Assist in the creation and maintenance of inclusive, environmentally sustainable communities making the best and most efficient use of already developed land, buildings and natural resources;
3. Ensure that the majority of development is focused into areas where services are available, and where facilities can be supported;

Meeting the Housing Need

4. Deliver housing that meets the needs of the community and local economy through the concentration of development in the Strategic Urban Extensions of Attleborough and Thetford and where services and facilities can be supported within or adjacent to the market towns of Dereham, Swaffham and Watton and the local service centres, whilst recognising the need for small scale and appropriate development in rural areas to support rural communities and services;
5. Support the development and maintenance of a balanced housing market and a variety of decent, affordable housing which meets the needs of all local people and supports economic and community development; and
6. Encourage high quality, sustainable and safe design for places and spaces, in

both the private and public realm, and which respects the character and local distinctiveness of Breckland's communities.

3.33 In line with sustainability principles, housing development should be directed to those settlements that are identified as having good access to services and facilities and consistent with the wider aims of sustainability within the context of the rural requirements of Breckland. The Key Towns, Market Towns and Local Service Centres identified in the Locational Strategy align best with this approach.

Breckland Local Plan (Adoption Draft) November 2019 453.34 It is recognised that the design and character of housing is important to the community and new housing should reflect the local character. Where higher density development is being proposed the accompanying Design and Access Statement should set out why a higher density is appropriate and its likely impacts in terms of design, character and sustainability for the locality.

3.35 Typically in smaller rural settlements residential development can be of a lower density, in the interests of efficient use of land, character and wider sustainability issues, proposed density levels should be justified, through an accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Parking Provision

3.36 Government policy seeks to restrict levels of parking associated with new development in order to reduce the use of the private car and promote other more sustainable forms of transport. The provision of car parking can also affect the appearance of a development and result in an inefficient use of land. The NPPF, allows planning authorities to set local parking standards taking into account of local circumstances. It is considered essential that an appropriate amount of parking is provided in new developments given the rural nature of Breckland and the current level of public transport provision within the district. In particular, adequate parking should be provided as part of residential developments.

3.37 In terms of trip destination and commercial development there is more scope to manage travel patterns and reduce parking vehicle provision. Here the accessibility by other modes of transport and potential travel planning measures can support a reduced parking provision and enable a more efficient use of land.

3.38 However, at both the home and point of destination, insufficient or inappropriately located parking can lead to problems of overspill parking from the development site onto surrounding streets and verges creating highway safety problems and unsightly environments.

3.39 In considering appropriate levels of parking, reference will be given to the parking provision standards as detailed in appendix 2 of this document which are based on the existing adopted requirements in the Core Strategy. Residential parking standards will be taken into account where necessary to manage the local road network and to avoid inappropriate on street parking. However, they will be applied flexibly having regard to local circumstances and proposals should reflect how they are to provide adequate off road parking.

3.40 Regard will also be given to the circumstances of the site, relevant advice on the design and integration of parking provision into development and the highways network and place-making. Parking requirements may be adjusted to help achieve good design objectives at locations with very good walking access to public transport and essential services, and to help protect heritage assets in conservation areas and listed buildings.

Self-Build and Design Quality Exceptions

3.41 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 places a duty on local

authorities to keep a register of individuals and community groups who have expressed an interest in acquiring land to bring forward self-build and custom-build projects. Also, to take account of, and make provision for, the interests of those on such registers in developing their housing initiatives and their local plans; allowing volume house builders to include self-build and custom-build projects as contributing towards their affordable housing obligations, when in partnership for this purpose with a Registered Provider.

3.42 The Council is supportive of self-build housing. The term 'self-build' can be used to refer to a wide range of approaches to creating a bespoke home, the level of input from the individual can range from a complete DIY project to employing contractors to build to your specification. The Council would like to see larger development sites incorporating plots / serviced plots for self-build housing, but also recognises that self-build plots represent a unique approach to supporting rural communities. The Council will support provision of self-build in line with national guidance, policies in this plan and through Neighbourhood Planning.

3.43 Using information from the Self Build Portal's 'Need a Plot', the 2015 Central Norfolk SHMA identified a relatively low number of purchasers looking for a site in Central Norfolk. This is confirmed by the feedback given on the Council's emerging register.

Policy HOU 11 - Residential Replacement, Extension and Alteration

Proposals for replacement, extension or alteration of rural dwellings must be contained within the existing curtilage. The building must be in residential use and not classed as abandoned.

Replacement

Replacement dwellings must be of a scale and design sensitive to the countryside setting, with a height and size similar to that of the original dwelling. If an alternative height or scale is proposed, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that the scheme exhibits exceptionally high quality of design and enhances the character and appearance of the locality.

Extension or alteration

Extensions or alterations to existing residential properties will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- A. The extension or alteration is not disproportionate in size in relation to the original dwelling/plot and does not alter substantially the character of the dwelling.
- B. The extended or altered dwelling respects the character of the existing dwelling.
- C. The design remains in keeping with the existing dwelling and building materials.
- D. The extension or alteration will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring property.

3.89 The original dwelling is taken to be the house as it stood at 1st July 1948 (or as originally built if constructed after this date).

Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

3.90 This policy relates to the re-use and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside, such as barns and other agricultural buildings. The conversion of agricultural buildings to dwelling houses is permitted development, subject to a number of criteria. There are limits to the number of dwellings to be converted and the size of building proposed for conversion (General Permitted Development Order Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q, 2015 and amendment to Part 3, Class Q, 2018). Outside of the exemptions set out within class Q, the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use in rural areas will be strictly controlled. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building.

3.91 The Council recognises that to sustain an active rural economy and support rural living, conversion of redundant buildings should be supported where appropriate. Proposals for the conversion of redundant farm buildings to retail, residential, leisure, office, industrial and storage uses will be considered again.

Policy EC 06 Farm Diversification

Proposals for farm diversification requiring planning permission will be permitted on existing farm-holdings provided that:

- a. They would make a positive contribution to the continued viability of the farm holding;
- b. They would retain or enhance the character of traditional farm buildings;
- c. Where possible, the proposal re-uses existing buildings of substantial and permanent construction which are structurally sound and capable of conversion without major alterations or the development is well-related to existing buildings if no suitable buildings are available for re-use;
- d. The agricultural diversification is subservient to the main agricultural use of the farm;
- e. Wherever possible, they add value to produce emanating from the farm or produced locally, or contribute to the tourism economy.
- f. The scale and nature of the diversification proposals are appropriate for the location and would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity, biodiversity, natural environment, landscape character and the enjoyment of the countryside;
- g. They do not require new dwellings within the rural area to support the enterprise;
- h. They do not create extensive areas of hard-standing, and
- i. The volume and type of traffic that would be generated is appropriate to the accessibility of the site and the standard of the local highway network.

Visitor Economy - Tourism

6.67 Breckland's environmental and heritage assets, including the heaths and woodlands of the Brecks, the traditional market towns and the general tranquillity and remoteness of the Breckland countryside are the particular factors which attract tourists to the area. Whilst it is recognised that tourism is an important contributor to the Breckland economy and that some tourist development will seek to locate in the countryside, it is important that tourist related development takes place in a sustainable manner in line with local and national policies in order that it does not

adversely affect the Breckland environment which attracts the tourist activity. The Brecks, Wensum Valley and Thetford Forest are key areas that attract visitors for both day trips and short stays. There are a wide network of footpaths, cycleways, bridleways, and public rights of way that provide excellent leisure and recreational opportunities. In addition, tourist attractions such as Banham Zoo also form large employers within the District.

6.68 Tourism is a growing part of the local economy. However, if not properly managed, it could have adverse impacts on the District's environment and the daily life of local people. The challenge is to enable and manage sustainable tourism, which will safeguard the countryside, heritage and culture for future generations while providing benefits to the local economy.

6.69 Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit rural businesses will be supported where these respect the character of the countryside. The Council will also support the provision and expansion of tourist /visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

6.70 The policy recognises the valuable contribution that tourist related industries make to the local economy. The provision of visitor accommodation through new-build, conversion or expansion will be supported in appropriate locations. Proposals will be supported in line with the development hierarchy and in the rural area should be in accordance with the proposed rural policies in this Plan including the housing policies HOU 04 and HOU 05. Proposals for tourism development that may have an effect on Sites of European, National & Local Nature Conservation importance such as the Breckland SPA, the River Wensum and the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, will have to meet the proposed environmental policies, covering Sites of European, National & Local Nature Conservation, notably ENV 02 and ENV 03. Camping and caravan sites are considered as tourism development not outdoor recreation.

6.71 In a rural District such as Breckland there are opportunities for hotel accommodation, cultural and leisure development to support the market towns and where applicable contribute to regeneration programmes. National planning policy identifies cultural facilities, leisure and hotels as town centre uses and therefore such uses are subject to the sequential approach and proposals should conform to the policy direction for town centres EC02. Proposals for serviced tourist accommodation in the rural areas should represent the most sustainable option to meet a particular need because it is a road related facility meeting the needs of road users or it Breckland Local Plan (Adoption Draft) November 2019 229 involves the re-use of sustainably located traditional rural buildings such as a complex of redundant farm buildings or a large country property.

Policy COM 01 – Design

New development should be designed to the highest possible standards. All new development must achieve a specification of high architectural, urban and landscape design quality and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area. The Council will promote high quality design in the District by requiring that the design of new development meets the following criteria:

a. Preserves or enhances the special character of the historic

environment, and complements the district's heritage assets, in accordance with policy ENV 07 & ENV 08;

b. Integrates to a high degree of compatibility with the surrounding area, in terms of: layout, form, style, massing, scale, density, orientation, materials, and design, in order to reinforce the positive and distinctive local character and amenity as described in the Breckland Historic Characterisation Study (2017);

c. Incorporates sustainable design and durable construction, observing best practice in energy efficiency and climate change mitigation, and is accessible and adaptable to different activities and land uses and the changing needs of all, including disabled and older people;

233d. Consists of high quality details and materials that respects or improves local character;

e. Responds appropriately to, and is completely integrated with, the existing layout of buildings, surrounding streets, open spaces and patterns of development. The layout of new development should create direct, recognisable, through routes that improve legibility and movement through places, and positively contribute to street frontages;

f. Ensures that high quality hard and soft landscaping is integral to layout and design, and opportunities to introduce green urban design solutions are optimised. Specifically, development proposals should respond to: i) landform; ii) levels, slopes and the fall from the ground; iii) trees on and close to the site; iv) natural boundary features; v) the biodiversity of the site and its context; and vi) maximise the use of permeable surfaces;

g. Is designed to reduce opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour, creating safe, secure and accessible environments;

h. Provides an appropriate level of amenity for buildings, as outlined in HOU 06;

i. Provides high standards of accommodation for housing in terms of size, quality and arrangement of internal space, external private and external communal amenity space, and access to usable open space;

j. Creates clear distinctions between private and public space, and integrates building services equipment and facilities in a well-planned manner;

k. Requires development to provide appropriate facilities for refuse, recycling and servicing;

l. Preserves key and important views, as illustrated in the Breckland Historic Characterisation Study (2017);

m. Does not compromise highway safety, enabling safe access for vehicles and for walking and cycling;

n. Provides adequate parking as outlined in TR 01 and consideration of safe storage for bicycles;

o. Development should be designed to reduce the impact on local air quality, particularly from road traffic, especially in those areas in or likely to impact on, areas identified as 'at risk' of exceeding air quality objectives.

Development that does not fully address the criteria above will not be permitted.

All development proposals should respond to current best practice and demonstrate that they are in general conformity with the design principles set

out in established urban design guidance, any subsequently produced design guidance Supplementary Planning Document adopted by the Council or other design guidance endorsed by the Council and/or through neighbourhood planning.

In some cases the Council will request the involvement of a developer funded Design Review, subject to viability.

Breckland Local Plan (Adoption Draft) November 2019 234 Healthy Lifestyles

7.11 Improving the health and wellbeing of the community is a priority of Breckland Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and a key objective of this Plan. Links between planning and health are apparent throughout the NPPF and accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance; stipulating that LPAs should involve all sections of the community in ensuring health and wellbeing and ensure that health infrastructure is considered in local and neighbourhood plans as well as in decision making.

7.12 The Local Plan seeks to improve the health and wellbeing for all by:

- Ensuring that all development is sustainable, making prudent use of resources, so as not to compromise the wellbeing of future generations;
- Providing incentives for young people who have left the area to return – namely facilitating employment provision, training opportunities and a good spread of housing that meets their needs;
- Protecting and enhancing existing social and community infrastructure – such as education, health, cultural and leisure facilities—to improve community wellbeing in line with an understanding of predicted future needs and current gaps in infrastructure;
- Working with partners to deliver sport and recreation schemes, developing and improving community facilities such as recreational areas and multi-use games areas for young people and creating opportunities for healthier lifestyles;
- Safeguarding and enhancing green infrastructure and providing a comprehensive network of high quality open spaces such as parks and gardens, and natural green spaces; and
- Supporting independent living for older and disabled people.

7.13 Health is influenced by social, economic and environmental conditions and planning policies have a significant role to play in creating the conditions for improving health. Accordingly, proposals for development will be screened to ensure they contribute to improved health outcomes for all and that negative effects are avoided. Development proposals can support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and help create healthy living environments which should, where possible, include making physical activity easy to access and create places and spaces to meet, to support community engagement and social capital.

7.14 The Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (2017) highlighted that the population in the age band 5-54, the most active population for participation in sport and physical activity, is projected to increase by 1.9% over the 2016-2031 period. However, rates of adult participation across all activities has decreased from 32.7% of all adults participating at least once a week in 2006 to 29.8% in 2016. The study also finds that over 50% of the adult population in Breckland did not participate in any sport or physical activity in 2016.

7.15 The Indoor and Built Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (2017) sets out the need to protect, enhance and provide facilities in the market towns within 35 Breckland. The study examined the supply (quantity, quality, accessibility and

capacity of provision) and demand (profiles of demographics, current and likely future sport participation and latent demand) of all facilities types within the District in order to 'build a picture' of the provision within the District and provide recommendations going forward to 2031.

7.16 To prevent unacceptable risks from pollution including cumulative effects of pollution on health, the NPPF states (paragraph 120), that the "potential sensitivity of an area or proposed development adverse effects from pollution, should be taken into account." Paragraph 124 adds, "that planning polices should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objections for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air action plan.

Policy COM 03 Protection of Amenity

For all new development consideration will need to be given to general amenity impact issues, especially residential amenity. Development will not be permitted which causes unacceptable effects on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants, or does not provide for adequate levels of amenity for future occupants. In assessing the impact of development on the living conditions of occupants, regard will be had to the following amenity considerations:

Breckland Local Plan (Adoption Draft) November 2019 2391. The protection of adequate areas of usable and scheduled private

amenity space for the occupiers of existing dwellings;

2. The provision of adequate areas of usable and secluded private amenity space for the occupiers of proposed dwellings, in keeping with the character of the immediate surrounding areas;

3. Overlooking of windows of habitable rooms and private amenity space;

4. Overbearing impact/visual dominance;

5. Overshadowing of private amenity space;

6. Loss of daylight and/or sunlight to existing windows of habitable rooms;

7. Odour, noise, vibration or other forms of nuisance such as artificial light pollution, insects and vermin; and

8. Other forms of pollution (including contaminated land, dust, air pollution, for example the emission of particulates etc).

Community Facilities

7.26 The Local Plan aims to support thriving urban and rural communities whilst protecting the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Whilst the delivery of new development - in particular housing - will be directed to the most sustainable locations in line with the locational strategy, there is a need to support the settlement hierarchy, rural economy and sustainable communities through the retention and development of local services and community facilities, such as village halls, schools, rural shops and public houses.

7.27 For the purposes of this policy community facilities are defined as:

- ☐ local shops;
- ☐ meeting places;
- ☐ indoor and outdoor sports venues;
- ☐ recreation/play areas;

- ☐ cultural buildings;
- ☐ public houses;
- ☐ petrol filling stations; and
- ☐ places of worship.

7.28 These, and the provision of new facilities at an appropriate scale to the settlement, will be supported.

7.29 The NPPF supports economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Planning policies and decisions should:

- ☐ Plan positively and promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings and places of worship;

Breckland Local Plan (Adoption Draft) November 2019 240 ☐ Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and

- ☐ Support sustainable growth of rural businesses, diversification of agricultural businesses and rural tourism and leisure developments.

7.30 It is recognised that local shops, and other community facilities such as pubs, post offices, petrol filling stations and sports and leisure facilities perform a valuable role in providing for daily needs in local communities across Breckland, not only reducing the need to travel for convenience goods shopping, but helping to maintain a sense of place and uniqueness for Breckland's rural communities. The loss of a valued local community facility or service can significantly reduce a community's ability to meet its day to day needs and also have an adverse impact on the wellbeing and social interaction of that community.

7.31 Accessibility to facilities and services remains a key issue for many communities in the District. In order to reduce the need to travel to access everyday facilities and to maintain sustainable communities, the Council supports the provision and retention of community facilities as reflected through the proposed hierarchy of centres.

7.32 The strategic economic policy direction regarding the retail hierarchy seeks to maintain and support the, provision in smaller villages serving more localised rural needs. The policy approach being to retain essential, facilities especially where they are the only such facility within a village. Local retail provision will be supported at a scale proportionate to the existing size and catchment but not to a level which would undermine similar provision in neighbouring villages. Other community facilities such as pubs, village halls, libraries, places of worship and schools also play a vital role in ensuring Breckland is a great place to live, work, learn and visit.

7.33 Proposals which would result in the loss of a community facility must demonstrate that efforts have been made to retain the facility and that opportunities for conversion to alternative community uses have also been explored. Supporting information should typically include:

- ☐ Marketing information such as the length of time for sale and the asking price;
- ☐ Details of the level of interest generated and any offers received;
- ☐ Consultation with, and level of interest from, the local community / service providers on a possible alternative community use;
- ☐ Whether there is scope for the multi-use of buildings or innovative ways of combining a range of services and facilities on one site.

7.34 In addition, under the Localism Act 2011, local communities can propose to add to the local register an asset of community value. Neighbourhood Plans are also well placed to highlight the valuable role of local centres and community facilities and can identify deficiencies in the provision of community facilities and help to safeguard existing ones.

GEN 02 Promoting High Quality Design

The Council will require high quality design in all development within the District that:

- ☐ respects and is sensitive to the character of the surrounding area and makes a positive architectural and urban design contribution to its context and location;
- ☐ contributes positively to the public realm and public spaces, protecting the high levels of amenity and quality of life making Breckland an attractive, successful and vibrant place for residents, workers and visitors;
- ☐ creates high quality, safe and sustainably designed buildings, places and streets; and
- ☐ maximises connectivity within and through a development and to the surrounding areas, including the provision of high quality and safe pedestrian and cycle routes.

Innovative and contemporary design where it enhances sustainability will be encouraged and promoted across the District. Development of poor design, that does not respect or improve the character and quality of the area and the way the area functions, will be refused planning permission.

The Council will produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Design to provide detailed guidance for new development.

Settlement Hierarchy

2.14 A key purpose of the Local Plan is to set out the strategic distribution of development. Determining how much, and where, development is allocated is essential in delivering sustainable development and essential community infrastructure. The locational strategy sets out the broad approach to development within the District.

2.15 The core principle of the NPPF, as set out in paragraph 17, requires that “Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.” Also paragraph 55 advocates that, “to promote sustainable Breckland Local Plan (Adoption Draft) November 2019 14 development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.”

Identification of Local Service Centres and Smaller Villages

2.16 The Local Plan identifies local service centres where they satisfy all of the following 5 qualifying criteria, with villages with settlement boundaries identified as having 3 of the 5 criteria:

- ☐ Public Transport – An assessment of the level of public transport access within the village. This included consideration of the frequency of services and whether it is possible to reach the destination during normal working hours.
- ☐ Community Facility - This can include a number of different facilities such as a

village hall, public house, restaurant or café.

☐ Employment – The assessment has considered the level of employment available within the village including whether there is a business park and also the size of the businesses within the settlement.

☐ Shop/Post Office

☐ School

2.17 The assessment has had regard to the distance of services and facilities from the designated settlement boundary/village core – and should only be considered to be available where they are within a recognised acceptable walking distance. Based on these criteria, an assessment has been made as to the availability of services within each village.

Material Planning Considerations

When a decision is made on a planning application, only certain issues are taken into account; these are often referred to as 'material planning considerations'.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Issues that may be relevant to the decision

(There may exist further material planning considerations not included here)

- Local, strategic, national planning policies and policies in the Development Plan
- Emerging new plans which have already been through at least one stage of public consultation
- Pre-application planning consultation carried out by, or on behalf of, the applicant
- Government and Planning Inspectorate requirements - circulars, orders, statutory instruments, guidance and advice
- Previous appeal decisions and planning Inquiry reports
- Principles of Case Law held through the Courts
- Loss of sunlight (based on Building Research Establishment guidance)
- Overshadowing/loss of outlook to the detriment of residential amenity (though not loss of view as such)
- Overlooking and loss of privacy
- Highway issues: traffic generation, vehicular access, highway safety
- Noise or disturbance resulting from use, including proposed hours of operation
- Smells and fumes
- Capacity of physical infrastructure, e.g. in the public drainage or water systems
- Deficiencies in social facilities, e.g. spaces in schools
- Storage & handling of hazardous materials and development of contaminated land
- Loss or effect on trees
- Adverse impact on nature conservation interests & biodiversity opportunities
- Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas
- Incompatible or unacceptable uses
- Local financial considerations offered as a contribution or grant
- Layout and density of building design, visual appearance and finishing materials
- Inadequate or inappropriate landscaping or means of enclosure

The weight attached to material considerations in reaching a decision is a matter of judgement for the decision-taker however the decision-taker is required to demonstrate that in reaching that decision that they have considered all relevant matters.

Generally greater weight is attached to issues raised which are supported by evidence rather than solely by assertion.

If an identified problem can be dealt with by means of a suitable condition then the Local Planning Authority is required to consider this rather than by issuing a refusal.

NON-MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

Issues that are not relevant to the decision:

(There exist further non-material planning considerations not included in this list)

- Matters controlled under building regulations or other non-planning legislation e.g. structural stability, drainage details, fire precautions, matters covered by licences etc.
- Private issues between neighbours e.g. land/boundary disputes, damage to property, private rights of access, covenants, ancient and other rights to light etc.
- Problems arising from the construction period of any works, e.g. noise, dust, construction vehicles, hours of working (covered by Control of Pollution Acts).
- Opposition to the principle of development when this has been settled by an outline planning permission or appeal
- Applicant's personal circumstances (unless exceptionally and clearly relevant, e.g. provision of facilities for someone with a physical disability)
- Previously made objections/representations regarding another site or application
- Factual misrepresentation of the proposal
- Opposition to business competition
- Loss of property value
- Loss of view

Planning Aid England provides free, confidential and independent planning advice.
Call: 0330 123 9244 or Email: advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

