

BAWDESWELL PARISH COUNCIL FORMAL RESPONSE TO THE BRECKLAND LOCAL PLAN
REGULATION 19 FINAL CONSULTATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bawdeswell Parish Council (BPC) is opposed to the Breckland Plan to impose a 120-house target on the village. It also remains concerned that planning staffs failed to take adequate account of, or respond to, BPC viewpoints stated repeatedly in the consultation process.

Bawdeswell has already seen an increase of 40+ houses within the current Local Plan without the expected improvements in infrastructure; so making a mockery that sustainability follows on from housing growth. On the contrary, since the recent housing increase, Bawdeswell has lost its full-time post office and public house. It also remains short of local employment opportunities, and continues to lack public transport to local medical facilities and adjacent market towns. Its limited sustainability recently resulted in the downgrading of the village from Local Service Centre to Primary Village under the new Plan. However, when one compares Bawdeswell to its nearest Primary Village, North Elmham, which boasts shops, 2 public houses and a doctor's surgery etc, one questions if Bawdeswell should even be a Primary Village?

Despite the above, BPC recognised that some development is inevitable, particularly given the recent central government policy of increasing regional housing targets. However, given the earlier Breckland target for Bawdeswell of 65 additional houses on 2 sites, coupled to its later downgrading to Primary Village, albeit counter-balanced by the increased central government targets, BPC expected the Bawdeswell target to remain roughly about the same, at 65 houses. Accordingly, BPC proposed the development of 45 houses on Site 161, close to the village; alongside a 20 houses and 2 retail units on Site 123. BPC was therefore amazed and seriously concerned to note the 120-house development on Site 161 in Breckland's latest Cabinet-approved draft Plan; and no consideration of Site 123 at all!

BPC's objections to the 120-house development on Site 161 are that it is too large for a village like Bawdeswell (a 30% increase in housing stock). No practical consideration has seemed to be been given to the community needs to support such a development; other than perhaps the 'lip-service' reference of "sustainability" running throughout the draft Plan. Bawdeswell's target is well above those set for other, far more sustainable, local primary villages. The Breckland plan for Site 161 involves the loss of valuable agricultural land, and an acute 'ribboning' effect, resulting in Foxley being subsumed within Bawdeswell!

BPC's proposal for 45 houses on the south-eastern part of Site 161, plus 20 plus houses and 2 retail units of Site 123, is a well-considered 'local' approach; rather than the illogical 'box-ticking' exercise put forward by Breckland planning staffs. Accordingly, BPC's strong recommendation is that the Breckland's excess housing target of 20.4% within the current Plan be reduced slightly by limiting housing development within Bawdeswell to 65 new houses.