



Brantham Regeneration Area Allocation Community & stakeholder workshop event 26 November 2014

Summary of key outputs

1. List of attendees

Trevor Nobbs – Brantham Parish Council
Graham Mower – Good Neighbour Scheme
Roger Dann – Brantham Scout & Guide Group
Joop Van Der Toorn – St Michaels Church
Alaistair McCraw – Brantham Parish Council
Jacqueline Heywood – Chair of Village Hall Committee
Paul Revell – Brantham Parish Council
Darren Smith – Brantham Leisure Centre
Jonathan Roe – PRC
Sue Dawes – BDC/MSDC
Dave Benham – BDC/MSDC
Nathan Pittam – BDC/MSDC
Kate Lowe – BDC/MSDC
Stuart McAdam – BDC/MSDC
Nick Ward – BDC/MSDC
Fionnuala Lennon – ATLAS / HCA
Geoff Gardner – ATLAS / HCA
James Farrar – ATLAS / HCA

Also in attendance: Andy Plant – St Francis Group, observatory role.

Apologies: Sarah Keys – Brantham Parish Council, Rev Stephne Van Der Toorn, St Michaels Church, David Wood, Alton Ward Member

2. Points raised following introductory slides

- Issue of wider transport impacts beyond the site needed to be reflected in the discussions.
- A number of people were unable to attend the event and wished to raise flag that the engagement exercise should not be rushed.

3. Group session

Group 1 Summary

Constraints plan

- No additional constraints were identified by the group.

Green infrastructure

- Importance of **decoy pond** as a village asset emphasised; need to preserve and enhance. Area used for fishing & walking – well-connected into the village footpath system. Pleasant walk/fishing area, steep hill – character ideal for fishing. A quiet area probably not suitable for more noisy or energetic recreation uses. No areas/links needing significant improvement were identified. Important that decoy pond remains a village asset and not 'subsumed' within the new development. How the interface between new development and the decoy pond area is designed is important to signal this. Circular walking route importance a big use plus route for running, decent footpaths; important tree landscape – well established should be retained.
- **Peninsula** – no formal access to villagers at present very isolated at the moment. Illegal access by kids taking place. Would be nice to have some public access to it as a quiet nature resource. Peninsula recreation area – less important than decoy.
- **Peninsula** – Cost of maintaining was raised and who would be responsible at the outset.
- **Decoy pond** is more important as an asset to the village than access to the peninsula if choices need to be made.
- **Good play facilities** in the vicinity at the moment. If more play space is required as a result of development, would be good to extend & enhance the play area along the northern boundary.
- Important to keep **mature trees** on the site and incorporate these into the new development.

Movement & access

- **Vehicle access** to the employment area very poor – Factory Lane & roundabout on A137 need improvement. Traffic backs up on the roundabout regularly – difficult to get out of the village – exacerbated by the traffic surges created by the level crossing. It was noted that other big new development are either taking place or planned in Manningtree – these will worsen the traffic on the A137.
- Concerned about creating a **second access onto Brooklands Road** because of impact this may have; roads in this area are narrow, have parked cars along them and buses have difficulty in getting along them; don't see how they could be improved to carry extra traffic; school times particularly difficult in terms of traffic congestion on the local roads; driveways for residential 35% due to slope; leads to on street parking; concern about industrial users using this access; suggested detailed design could through zoning make area less attractive to drive through Brooklands residential area; access for emergency vehicles needed.
- **Bus services** to and from the village have been cut in recent times, e.g. service to East Bergholt where the doctors surgery is located. Bus services are a lifeline for the elderly residents of the village – important to retain and improve them if possible.
- Potential for good **pedestrian links** between the village and any new development. Link to school & shop particularly important – would be good to have a look at them to see if they could be improved.
- Would be beneficial to improve **footpath and cycle links** to the station & Manningtree – consider creating a safe crossing to the station.
- **Parking** at the station is at a premium given the wide catchment of users who travel from some distance to use it.

- Desire for **pedestrian access** along the edge of the estuary inlet was explored – no public access at the moment so difficult to gauge whether it would be a priority or not. Would be helpful if any new footpaths linked into the good network in and around the village to enhance it. The dangers associated with the estuary were highlighted – steep banks, contamination.
- **Important pedestrian links** to create within the site – good direct link between the existing village and the decoy pond. Links to war memorial were explored – it was agreed that it was important to give it a better setting & access, however, it is worth exploring whether it might be better to relocate it to a more suitable setting in the village.

Form of development

- Importance of retaining the sense of the **Decoy Pond** area as a village asset as emphasised – need to carefully consider what type of buffer area is needed is an interface between new development & the pond area. Also need to build in a pleasant pedestrian link to the pond area across the site.
- It was noted that **springs** cross the hillside – could these be incorporated within green space?
- **Views** linking the village to the estuary are important – two key view points were identified which it would be good to protect.
- The difference in **levels** between existing development along Woodlands Road and the site was noted – this could be used along with ensuring new gardens backed onto existing gardens to minimise overlooking of the existing dwellings.
- The **scale of development** in Brantham is low – one- and two-storey – this approach should be applied to any development on the hillside (ie max of two storeys) – also to protect views across the estuary; although it may be possible to have higher buildings on the flat employment area at the bottom of the hill.
- If new development is to take place, it must include a **mix of homes** of different types & sizes – affordable homes for young people, family homes and homes that older people in the village may want to downsize to. It would be good to provide warden-assisted housing.
- The area along the **estuary** was discussed – because this area is not publicly accessible to villagers at the moment, it is not perceived as an important area – but if development does take place next to it, it would be good to reflect its setting – might be a good location for a café or restaurant.
- What kind of development/residential; affordable housing needed - Temple Pattle mix a good example
- Ageing village; warden assisted old folks home suggested; downsizing.
- Two storey; streetscape; three storey/above brownfield; retain existing character with lower height proviso D

Facilities

- If **new development** takes place here, it will mean that many more people will be living in this southern part of the village. The development should accommodate a corner shop to cater for this part of the village – a location along Factory Lane would mean that it was reasonably accessible to both existing & new residents; important to link in the village. Existing facilities (shop) 7-8 minute walk from development.
- With respect to the need for new **community facilities**, it was noted that currently the village has the village hall (in need of some refurbishment) and

the leisure centre – both these are very well used and probably at capacity. It was considered that the village might not be able to sustain a third community facility, notwithstanding an increase in population, and it is probably better to improve the existing facilities rather than build an additional community building.

- The need for additional **playing pitches** was highlighted. Insufficient pitches to cater for current demand in the village. Existing leisure pitch very constrained so can't really extend it, plus existing changing facilities inadequate. In terms of other areas where it might be possible to consider pitches, the following were identified:
 - On the peninsula, though the difficulties with access under the rail line, plus the impact on wildlife would probably rule this out.
 - South of the decoy pond where there is some flat land – though concerns were expressed about the impact this might have on the quiet setting of the decoy pond currently enjoyed.
 - It was noted that if new pitches were developed away from the current leisure centre, they would require changing facilities and car parking – which would have an impact on cost and impact. Worth considering near the decoy pond – would need to be looked at.
- Young people in the village would like a **skatepark**.
- Cafe to **riverside frontage** opp to make more of it; yacht club.

Group 2 Summary

The group was asked to suggest test the existing evidence base by using the constraints plan prepared on behalf of St Francis and the Social Infrastructure Plan showing existing facilities and services. The following topics were covered during the discussion:

Access and movement

- **Access to the North** – is of concern as Brooklands Rd, Palfrey Heights and especially the even narrower Brooklands Rise are seen as not fit for through traffic. Junctions onto A317 from Palfrey Heights and Birch Drive are already difficult due to gradients and visibility.
- **Schools** – the issue of travel to school was discussed, particularly the risks around road traffic and need to improve pedestrian routes through to Brooklands; informal routes are used at the moment but direct/attractive routes through northern part of site needed. Routes to the new development would be expected to use Pattern Bush Close or Welhams Way
- **Wider integration with Brooklands** – several routes through were discussed and particular emphasis needed in relation to access to Decoy Pond which is currently via informal routes.
- **Factory Lane** – 8m at its narrowest point therefore the footpath should be diverted, but recognition that it is the only reasonable option and has been used historically as the main access point into the employment site for over 100 years.
- **Wider traffic issues around Brantham** – existing issues associated with access onto A137 need to be recognised as it is thought to be already congested and unsuitable for further traffic
- **Access to train station/cycling/wider connections beyond site** – dangerous underpass through to station especially for walking and cycling. Though some acknowledgement that these would require

costly solutions outside scope of allocation site. Early morning and evening movements to train station difficult.

- **Adjacent railway line**, concern expressed, unstable land and landslide issues.

Green Infrastructure

- **Play areas** – existing play areas across village undergo regular upgrades and improvement and are generally well used; there is an existing informal play area north of the allocation area which is well used but could be improved; not all routes are formalised; key ones need to be identified and improved
- **Decoy Pond** – importance and popularity was emphasised; it's already used as a quiet/informal piece of open space and the group did not wish to see this informal character change; informal character to be reflected in the edge treatment and general approach to development close to the Decoy Pond; within these constraints pedestrian routes around Decoy Pond could be improvement
- **Peninsula** – its importance as habitat was acknowledged; should be cleaned up, but at the same time its current unattractiveness was recognised and the costs would have to be judged against other S106 options.

Built Form/views/housing

- **Views** to the mudflats are not particularly special and are obscured by railway embankment from the slope; views to the slope from other side of Estuary were recognised as more important
- **Variety in built form and housing types** was emphasised; the development should avoid uniformity and cul-de-sac approaches; the group highlighted mistakes made in adjoining residential areas that should be avoided e.g. 1970s estate to the west which lacks legibility, poor for walking and too dense.
- **Layout of development** needs to reflect steep slope and contours of site;
- Reference was made to popularity of original solid terraced properties associated with employment site; they are small but remain popular as they have retained **character** and provide good quality housing; they retain a sense of place and are known as 'top, middle and bottom streets'.
- **Housing for younger people** needed but this reflects issues across all villages; in recent past too many larger executive homes built that are beyond budgets and not meeting need;
- **War memorial** – could be improved, made more of a feature at relatively little cost; opportunities to relocate within employment area could be explored so long as setting improved and connection with original employment area is retained; many people are currently unaware of its existence; consultation with previous employees who worked on the site and still live in village suggested; Church has its own memorial
- **Building heights** at the top of the hill should be reflect existing relatively low heights and not obscure views. No strong views over whether or not heights at the bottom of the hill could be high enough to see over the railway line.

Facilities/Services

- Existing facilities, Co-op, hairdressers, tea room, Scout and guide hut, public house, takeaways/restaurant, photographic studio.
- Reference made to previous **ICI social club** situated on the employment site that was closed; request for this function to be reinstated in any new scheme (meeting room function was flagged); reference to practical difficulties with existing community facilities within the village – village hall is too small, limited scope for expansion and there are access difficulties with leisure centre and village hall; modernisation required.
- **New Scouts Hut meeting facility** is needed. Nice if this was dedicated but acceptance that a shared space with a dedicated lockable storage area would suffice. Perhaps opportunity for small commercial lock-up units; need for GP health provision within the village and scope for retail, perhaps on Factory Lane;
- **Existing facilities** across the village are fragmented as development has been piecemeal; no identifiable heart to village at the moment; there has been expansion in the past without requisite improvement to facilities; Cattawade area has been seen as separate area for long time
- Need for more **sports pitches**; there are existing conflicts with existing residential areas which restricts improvement potential

4. Summing Up/Next Steps

- Babergh DC to collate & review feedback and discuss approach to next session with St Francis. The applicant will review all the feedback provided to feed into the masterplanning exercise.
- The topics discussed and feedback given during the session will be collated by ATLAS and circulated for accuracy via Sue Dawes.
- Next session is scheduled for Thursday 4th December 18.00