

Planning Application – Consultation Response

Planning Application Reference:	DC/19/04755
Site:	Land To The Rear Of Plough And Fleece Inn Great Green Cockfield Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0HJ
Proposal:	Outline Planning Application (Access to be considered all other matters reserved) - Erection of up to 28no. dwellings (Plots 5, 6 and 7 of Reserved Matters Permission DC/19/02020 to be repositioned/amended)
Prepared by:	BMSDC Strategic Planning Policy and Infrastructure
Date:	20/04/2020

1. Policy position

Cockfield is currently adopted as a Hinterland Village in accordance with Babergh Core Strategy (2014) policy CS2. Emerging evidence base (material consideration) that is underpinning the emerging Joint Local Plan (JLP) identifies Cockfield (Great Green) as an emerging hamlet location. This shows in terms of settlement hierarchy there are no significant changes to the Cockfield settlement since the 2014 CS2 policy was adopted. Therefore, there are no strategic policy encouragement or direction to suggest major development is appropriate in this location for the long-term. It is also important to recognise policy CS2 links to policy CS11, which encourages well related proportionate development to prevent the need for unsustainable modes of frequent transport, which is directly linked to policy CS15.

The recent Settlement Hierarchy Review (evidence base document dated July 2019), identifies that the services and facilities in Cockfield are limited and spread out, which needs to be taken into account when considering proposals for major development. Cockfield has a place of worship and a play area as facilities, together with a village shop and post office at Howe Lane. It is also understood public transport is available but limited.

In light of the rural sporadic location of this proposal, together with the limited services and facilities, this proposal is not encouraged and it is considered it would put further strain on unplanned infrastructure. It is recognised that development proposals in locations such as Cockfield are largely dependent on the private vehicle.

2. Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) position

The IDP (July 2019) sets out both Babergh and Mid Suffolk's infrastructure requirements and priorities. It was published on the 22nd July 2019 as evidence base which supports the Joint Local Plan and is an iterative document which will change over time dependant on changing infrastructure capacity, requirements and priorities.

There are no proposed site allocations or proposed boundary expansions for the settlement of Great Green, Cockfield, within the emerging Joint Local Plan.

For the purpose of this response, and to understand the impact on infrastructure capacity, the content of the IDP has been considered together with the existing planning permissions and responses from infrastructure providers.

Set out below are the current planning applications (over 10 dwellings) in Cockfield (other than this application): -

- DC/17/05332 - Land to the North West of Mackenzie Place - Hybrid planning application - Erection of 42 no. dwellings (Full Planning Application); Erection of 9 no. self-build plots (Outline Planning Application). Total of 51 dwellings. Granted in June 2018.
- DC/19/02020 (Reserved Matters) and DC/18/00306 (Outline) - Land to the West of Plough And Fleece Inn, Great Green - for 10 dwellings. Reserved Matters granted in September 2019. Under construction.

Within the settlement of Great Green, there are planning applications for under 10 dwellings to also bear in mind such as DC/19/03063/FUL for 9 dwellings (within the settlement boundary) granted in September 2019; and DC/18/03180/OUT for 5 dwellings (outside of the settlement boundary) refused in November 2018, appeal dismissed in June 2019, which concluded: *that the adverse impacts of the proposal which would arise from the unsuitability of the location of the appeal site for five new dwellings would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.*

It is recognised there has been a major development approved under reference DC/17/05332 (Mackenzie Place) for 42 dwellings, which looks to have provided significant benefits with regard to affordable housing and community needs. It is also identified five dwellings (Felsham Road) under application DC/18/03180 (dismissed on appeal) has been unable to provide the same overriding benefits. The application in question (DC/19/04755) provides some benefits to the community, particularly in terms of the types of dwellings, however these benefits remain in a rural sporadic location that is not encouraged through the emerging plan-led process.

There are essential infrastructure needs identified in the IDP:

- Education

For Primary education, the local catchment school is Cockfield CEVCP Primary School where there is capacity to provide for this development and other committed growth. The IDP did not show this primary school as needing expansion in relation to planned growth. The primary school is just over 2km (approx. 1.4 miles), away from the site, along Howe Lane and Church Lane. There are existing footways which can enable walking between the proposed site to the primary school (and passing the village shop and post office). The County Council is currently looking to assess whether the walking route to school (which is under 2 miles, as per the education standards) is a Safe Route to School.

For Secondary and Post 16 education, the local catchment school is Thurston Community College, where provision can be made for this development through expansion which is planned from 1940 to 2190 pupil places. The IDP refers to CIL contributions which would be expected towards this expansion.

- Transport:

Specific site details and required contributions have been provided through the County Council Highway response in January 2020. Although the development would not have a severe impact on the highway network, the response refers to the access to the primary school, which although within walking distance, there are concerns over the safety of the walking route. As referred under education, the County Council is looking to re-assess whether a safe walking route can be achieved.

The closest bus stops are approx. 350m from the site which is considered within walking distance to catch public transport but with a minimal bus service.

- Health

The nearest health facilities for this settlement are the Long Melford Practice and branch of this practice at Lavenham. The IDP position for health in this area is being reviewed in light of the committed growth and planned growth, in preparation for the next iteration of the emerging Joint Local Plan.

3. Summary

It will be essential that the above points are considered in conjunction with the current application process and infrastructure needs are addressed in accordance with the respective infrastructure providers consultation replies, this response and the IDP.

Overall the application is a major development proposal in a small rural settlement with limited accessibility to essential services and facilities.

From an education infrastructure point of view, the primary school pupils may have the possibility to walk safely to school, if it is assessed as such by the County Council. If this is not the case, then both primary and secondary school pupils will primarily be driven or bused to their respective schools.

This additional, unplanned growth would therefore create unnecessary adverse harm in respect of social and environmental conditions, and as such this proposal weighs against paragraphs 103, 104a) and 108a) of the NPPF.

In consideration of the above the proposed development is not considered to conform to national and local planning policy and due to its remoteness/limited accessibility is considered unsustainable and consequently harmful in accordance with para 79 and 103 of the NPPF.

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