

Bawdsey Parish Council

Response to Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review

This response is based on the comments made in our one- to-one meeting with the Planning Department and the comments made during Parish Council meetings on the review itself and issues arising such as housing, transport, etc. The comments have been shared with Parish Council members, and any additional views taken into account.

Our community in 2036 – hopes and fears

Bawdsey, a rural village at the end of the road from Woodbridge and the A 12, is likely to grow in size – see comments on housing below – but we hope in proportion to its current size. Despite its small size, there are many social activities in the village, and Bawdsey Village Hall and Recreation Ground are well used and well cared for. Residents enjoy living in a small and active community, and there is no reason to suppose this community life will change much over the next twenty years or so. The scale of the village and the access to beach, river and countryside are what attract people to this area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

We will face additional traffic because of housebuilding around Ipswich, Martlesham and Woodbridge, and the activities of PGL at Bawdsey Manor. **We do not expect there to be many local employment opportunities, but would obviously welcome any small enterprise starting up in the area.** We would hope that our local school would continue to thrive – a housing-related issue in part.

All of us who have lived in this area have noticed the gradual increase in tourist numbers, whether on bikes, in car or in motor homes. **Our current fairly relaxed attitude to parking may well have to change to reflect this pressure, without becoming too ‘urban’ in the process. We are also more conscious of needing to address the speed of traffic through the village.**

We also face the dilemma of maintaining an area of quiet rural countryside and beach for all to enjoy without damaging that environment, overwhelming it with people and damaging the range of animal, bird and plant life that it supports. **The current view seems to be that we want to give visitors and residents as much freedom as possible, while at the same time protecting the environment where necessary and using appropriate signage to educate and inform. Such signs, like parking areas, should not be too many and not too obtrusive.**

One of the positive steps to emerge recently is that Parish Councils here are beginning to think more in terms of working together on such matters.

The other key issues are undoubtedly public transport – or rather the lack of it – in places, very poor broadband and mobile phone coverage and concern about coastal and river wall erosion. We are well served by surgeries locally, but Bawdsey residents have to travel to reach these and other health facilities further afield. Getting to shops is a similar problem. Surely we should not be saying that only those owning cars can live in villages? A financially well-supported and more accessible dial-a-ride system is needed.

Not enough energy and thought is being put into good mobile and broadband coverage. These affect the lives of local people, tourists and those running businesses locally.

Coastal and river defence should be addressed realistically by all concerned groups working together; this is a problem that is certainly going to preoccupy us all on the coastal parts of the peninsula in the years to come.

Housing

All attractive coastal villages face exactly the same problems and Bawdsey is no exception - a high proportion of second homes affecting the sustainability of the community, inflated prices affecting the ability of local people to buy or rent, and development which can be unsuitable in design and scale.

(It is worth noting that some second home owners do make an effort to be involved in the life of the village)

The Parish Council, in its response to planning applications, shows real awareness of the character and distribution of local housing, and has recently done considerable work on listing non-heritage assets.

As well as giving priority to appropriate materials, construction and finishes, the Parish Council aims to promote environmentally responsible buildings in its comments on planning.

The Parish Council has accepted the principle of Enabling Development taking place so that Flood Cell 1 can be maintained in an effective way, thus offering protection from flooding along that section of the Deben.

The Parish Council has always paid close attention to the village envelope and would certainly want to see this maintained as it reflects the basic structure of the village. As with many Suffolk villages, Bawdsey has a main street (as well as lanes leading off it) where much of the housing is to be found; placing housing beyond this spine of buildings should always be given very careful consideration.

In terms of the options proposed for future housing, taking into consideration the School Meadow site, possible enabling development, and the potential offered by site 455, then this looks a reasonable supply of housing (provided a combination of affordable/rentable/ private is achieved) for the period to 2036.

In terms of the options presented for future growth in the area as a whole, Option 6 page 31 would seem to fit best with villages on the peninsula.

The most important development recently has been the moves to establish a Community Land Trust based on representatives from the villages of Bawdsey, Alderton, Shottisham, Hollesley and potentially Boyton, which will look at the possibility of acquiring sites and properties for the affordable housing market. The intention would be to keep this housing available for people from the local area by working with and reaching agreement with housing associations. Such an approach is already under consideration for the School Meadow development.

Comments on specific sites identified in the Local Plan Review

1035 – this is not suitable for development, nor intended for such by the current owner; it was the subject of a request for boundary clarification. Its position in relation to other buildings in any case makes it totally unsuitable.

536 – A large site not connected in any real way to the village community and situated on high ground where it would have an impact on visual amenity. This also lies directly alongside and is out of scale with the very specialised development of the barn and farm building-based conversions of the Manor Estate. We do not see how any development covering such a potentially large area could be in keeping with the design and density of the Manor Estate. We cannot conceive of any acceptable development on this site.

455 – Provided development here was kept in scale with existing housing styles and layout, there may well be potential in this site to add to the stock of housing without detriment to the village as a whole. Access from the highway could be achieved, though the site does offer challenges in terms of its varying ground levels. The only site of the three listed for Bawdsey that offers possible potential.

Andrew Block

Chairman, Bawdsey Parish Council

29th October 2017