

Response of Bentley Parish Council to Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Joint Local Plan Consultation: 2/11/2017

- Bentley Parish Council has read and considered the Joint Local Plan Consultation Document. It has considered its response, and wishes this to be taken as a response on behalf of the residents of the village, from the fully constituted and elected Parish Council
- The Parish appreciates the need for a new, refreshed, evidence based local plan. It accepts the need for an objectively assessed housing growth requirement, based on projected population growth, and the need for economic growth in Babergh, but notes there are very considerable variables in play which may materially change prospects for growth (e.g. Brexit).
- Whilst it is desirable to have an overview of achievable growth within a District, this will always be subject to the significant external pressures of political change, and external economic pressures e.g. the London housing and job market and consequent commuter demand. Local housing growth has not been historically, and is currently not generally, directed centrally from within the District but subject to piecemeal planning applications and the external imperatives such as the NPPF and government funding changes and incentives.
- Bentley is a Village of 330 households, with its own amenities of a Village School, Village Hall, a community run Village Shop, a Community owned Village Pub, a Community owned Playing Field, and a Community run Play Area.
- In 2014/5 the Parish Council undertook a Affordable Housing Needs assessment, and consequently has initiated a project to build 6-8 affordable homes in conjunction with Babergh District Council and Hastoe Housing Association.
- The village currently has approved planning applications for 20 new houses, yet to be constructed within the village.
- As a hinterland village to the Capel St. Mary core group of villages, according to the relevant hierarchies of development (Ipswich Centred, or Transport corridor (A12) centred) the village might be considered as being suitable for 5 or 10% of the growth in local housing provision in the next 20 years. With the provision of already approved and planned development the Village could be said to be providing up to, or in excess of, likely appropriate housing allocations.
- The SHELAA process has identified 2 areas of land adjoining the village core which have been deemed suitable for possible development. The areas concerned may be

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considered as being potentially suitable for 60 and 40 houses respectively. This level of additional housing would represent an increase of housing numbers of 30% in the community, which would be totally disproportionate in terms of the projected local plan, and in terms of desirable development within the village. Such a scale of additional development would meet with very significant opposition.

- The SHELAA process has also identified potential areas for housing development in Capel St Mary and Copdock and Washbrook for in excess of 1000 houses, which, if approved would vastly oversupply the local component required of the Core and Hinterland Group of which Bentley is a part, and put great strains on infrastructure such as Schools, Health provision, and local logistics, in particular A.12 junctions and the already greatly congested and frequently blocked Copdock interchange. It also potentially would greatly increase through traffic in Bentley with commuter traffic to Manningtree Station.
- We consider that any further development in the village or locally should be linked to improvements in infrastructure, which in Bentley particularly requires improvement of road traffic junctions, road safety and traffic calming, provision of mains water and sewage, footpath provision and high-speed broadband provision, safe access to the Village School for pedestrians, cars and cycles and improvements in local health services.
- Bentley values its rural situation, and the benefits of local woodlands, footpaths, open spaces and bridleways and the historic woodland and the adjacent Dedham Vale and Stour valley AONB that surround it. It would not wish to become engulfed in suburban sprawl from Capel St. Mary or ribbon development along the A.12. Any planned development should respect the historic landscape, and the rural amenities of this and other smaller villages, that materially add to the well-being and lifestyle choices of residents.
- Bentley Parish Council is further canvassing for and encouraging further responses to Babergh from residents in the Village.

Local planning consultation link: <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/joint-local-plan-consultation-document/>

Signed on behalf of Bentley parish Council: