

Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan

As I write this there are 3 days remaining of the consultation on the Plan. Hence, I can't quite give final information on the comments received, and obviously we are still in the process of reviewing those that have come in up to now, so I can only give highlights of our reactions to them.

First, I thought some simple numbers might be informative:

Total days consultation: **52**

Number of organisations invited to review the Plan: **121**

Number of organisations that have made comments: **4**

(Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Police and Sport England)

Number of comments from Breckland Council: **183**

Number of comments from Norfolk County Council: **7**

Number of village households that received a leaflet explaining the Plan: approximately **750**

Number of villagers who have simply supported the Plan without comment: **41**

Number of villagers who have supported the Plan, subject to their comments: **3**

Number of villagers who have objected to the Plan: **1**

Number of online "drop-in" meetings held to allow villagers to ask questions about the Plan and make comments: **8** totalling 5 hours 20 minutes

Number of villagers who joined an online meeting: **0**

Number of hours a Plan hotline was open: **418**

Number of calls to the Plan hotline: **3**

At the same time as the consultation began, we commissioned a 'health check' of the Plan by an independent examiner. That review is complete and made **70** recommendations.

Clearly in terms of quantity, it is the Breckland Council comments and the recommendations of the Health Check that require the most attention.

To date we have addressed all but **5** of the health check recommendations. **4** of those remaining relate to later stages of the Plan and so have been

deferred. The 5th has been referred to the owner of one of the allocated sites for input.

Many of the Breckland Council comments are preferences for formatting and presentation. However, the Council has objected to some important aspects of the Plan, those being:

- Limiting development on the 9 allocated sites to no more than a total of 70 new houses. Breckland Council wants that to be amended to be “at least 70” with no suggested upper limit;
- Phasing of development throughout the Plan period to 2036, to allow the village to absorb it and give a chance for necessary infrastructure improvements to be made. Breckland Council seeks to remove this control on the pace of development;
- Site densities. Breckland Council seeks to increase these, which of course would increase the number of houses permitted;
- The number and scope of policies dealing with flood risk.

For the first three of these, we feel Breckland Council has unilaterally backtracked on agreements we made with them on all three subjects in October 2019. That coupled with the fact that we consider all three to be fundamental controls necessary on development in the village, means we cannot agree with the Council, and will not concede them. Instead we have added yet more evidence to the Plan in support of its approach. Similarly, with the drainage policies, which we feel are essential to protect at risk areas of the village.

All the same, it seems inevitable that Breckland Council will again object to these controls at the Plan’s final consultation. That being the case, the decision will rest with whoever examines the Plan and we will hope that our arguments tip the balance in favour of the Plan’s policies as they stand.

As usual, if you have any comments or questions on any of this, or the Neighbourhood Plan in general, or if you'd like to be added to our mailing list, please get in touch with me. **Most importantly, stay healthy and safe!**

Chris Blow, STNP Work Group leader



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***Neighbourhood Plan
Shaping the future of
Saham Toney!***