

SAHAM TONEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PRESENTATION TO VILLAGERS 14th AUGUST 2018



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU ABOUT

A: What's happened since the consultation in March / April

Consultation responses

The health check

Consultant's review of views

Local Plan hearings

Meeting with George Freeman

Comments on draft NPPF revision

New relations with Breckland planning

Our involvement with planning applications

B: What's coming next

Further grant application

More Local Plan hearings

Biodiversity mapping

A village character assessment

A design guide

Site allocations

Repeat Reg. 14 consultation

Continued involvement with planning applications

Meetings with Breckland Council

Revised Planning rules (NPPF)

Further into the future



CONSULTATION RESPONSES - 1

Breckland Council had 77 comments:

Want unspecified start date for allocation (Policy 1)

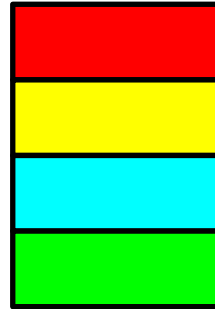
Dislike our approach to community benefit and engagement (Policies 1, 2A & 2B)

Propose more onerous conditions for us than their own Plan (Policy 2A)

Reject most of the strategic gap to Watton (Policy 5)

Don't accept protection of the Mere (Policy 7A)

Seek to relax the protection of communal views (Policy 7B)



7 NOT AGREED - REJECTED

34 TO BE DISCUSSED

15 WE NEED TO DO MORE WORK

21 AGREED

Read the Breckland comments in full on our website:

www.stnp2036.org

CONSULTATION RESPONSES - 2

The 137 responses were overwhelmingly in favour:



The policies – **overall 93% agreed**

The protected views – **overall 95% agreed**

The Parish action points – **overall 93% agreed**

Principal objections were to the flood risk maps and some of the wildlife routes
Both will be updated

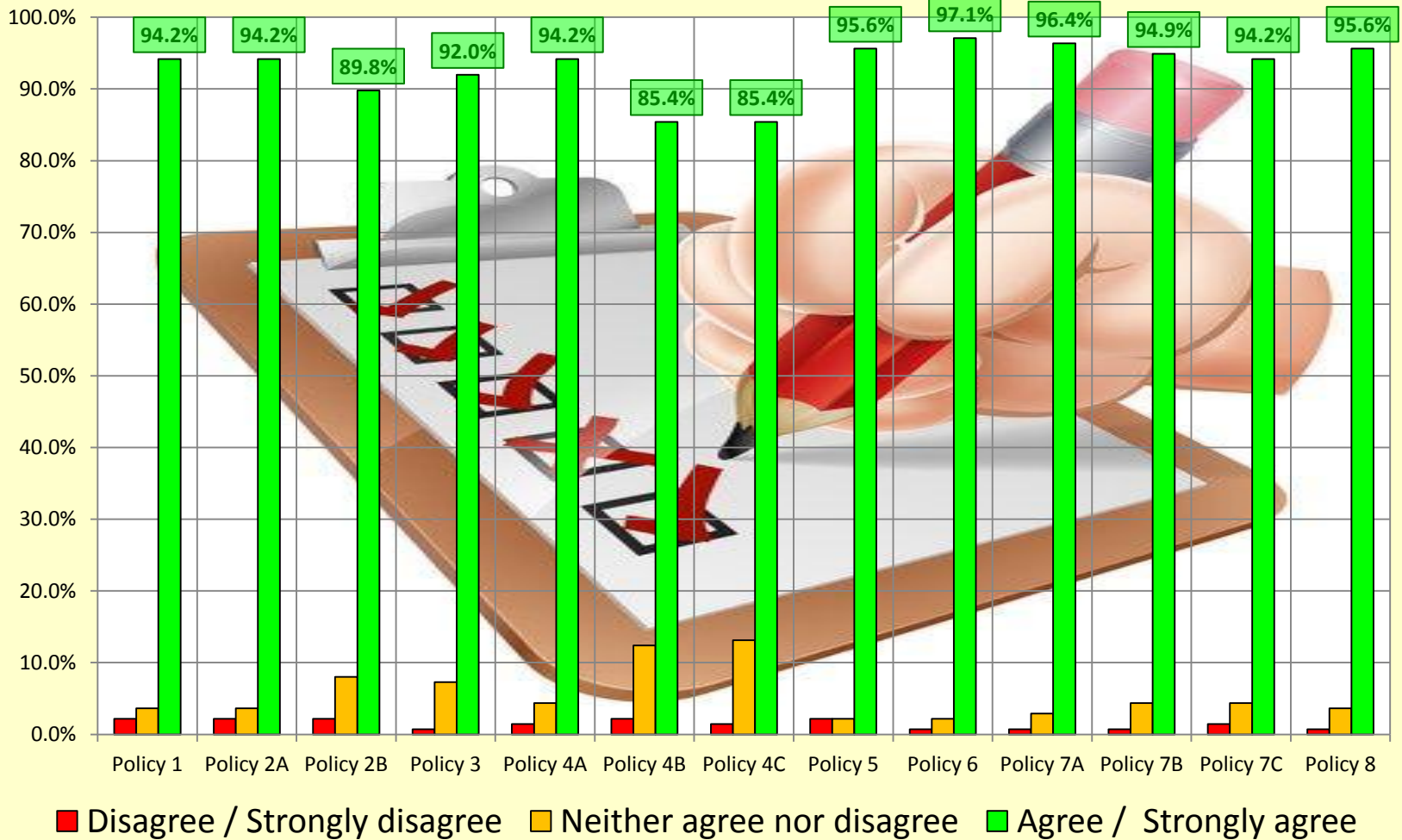
Additionally some useful individual points were submitted

See all the facts and figures and read the full responses on our website at:

www.stnp2036.org

Villager Rating of Policies

Overall 64 times as many agree with the policies than disagree



CONSULTATION RESPONSES - 3

Others

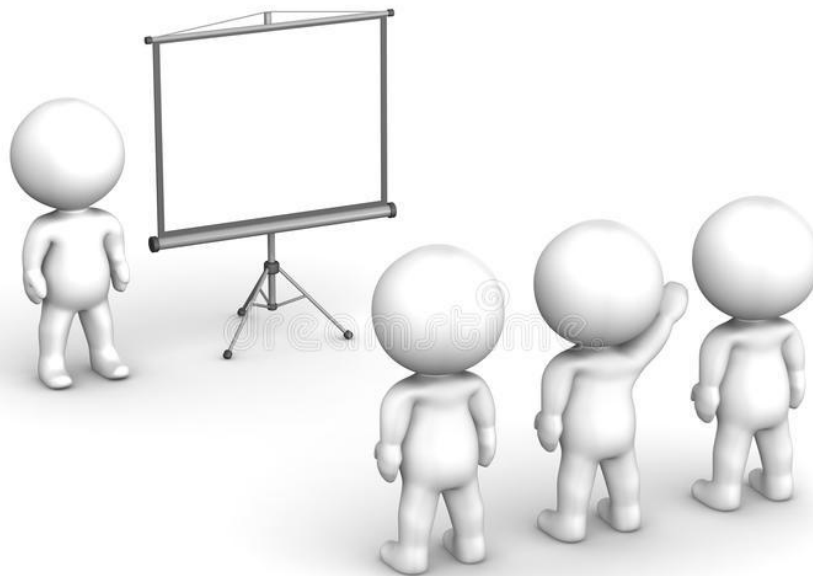
Of 128 organisations and local landowners we contacted, 9 made comments:
Anglian Water supported our drainage policy;
Historic England made comments that will help us improve the heritage policy;
Both the **Norfolk Wildlife Trust** and the **Woodland Trust** supported our wildlife policy and gave some ideas to improve nature conservation;
Several **Norfolk County Council** specialists commented on the policies for heritage, drainage and wildlife;
The Ramblers suggested designating an official footpath off Coburg Lane;
The Norfolk Crime Prevention Officer advised us to include the police advice “Secured by Design”
Sport England provided their standard information on open spaces; and
The Bowes estate put forward a site at The Piggeries for consideration

Read the full responses on our website at:

www.stnp2036.org

CONSULTATION RESPONSES Q&A

Any questions or comments?



THE HEALTH CHECK



What is a health check?

Essentially it's a dry run of the sort of formal independent examination the Plan will go through later, prior to a village referendum being allowed

Who did it for us?

We engaged a well-respected independent examiner, Ann Skippers, to review the Plan and all of its supporting documents

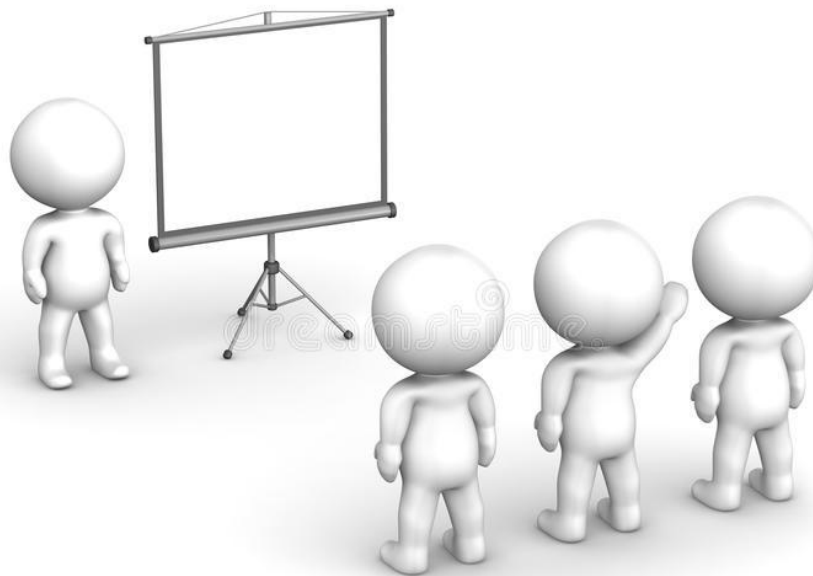
What were the results? Ann highlighted both strengths and weaknesses:

- 😊 Issues well explained
- 😊 Vision & objectives clear
- 😊 Proposed consultation with PC
- 😊 Community benefit approach
- 😊 Policy implementation text
- 😊 Housing needs assessment
- 😊 Housing density approach
- 😊 Heritage policy
- 😊 Local green space policy
- 😊 Presentation of communal views

- 😞 Presentation could be improved
- 😞 Restructure policies & evidence
- 😞 Better justify prescriptive policies
- 😞 Relationship to Local Plan
- 😞 Evidence for strategic gap
- 😞 Justification for communal views
- 😞 Some confusion in drainage policy
- 😞 Overall policy map hard to read

HEALTH CHECK Q&A

Any questions or comments?



LOCAL PLAN HEARINGS - 1

What was their purpose and how were they organised?

Plan submitted to Inspector Nov. '17

He made initial review and posed questions

Council wrote provisional answers

Anyone could comment on those

At public hearings the examiner questioned the Council and those who applied to do so had chance to contribute to the discussions.

17 hearings took place from April to June, some of which extended to several days

How were we involved?

I participated in all the 8 hearing sessions relating to our plan – a total of 8

Others from our work group attended to listen

I was able to ask questions and make comments

During the process I made useful contacts within the Council, and with other village groups writing neighbourhood plans

LOCAL PLAN HEARINGS - 2

What were the results?

Note: Just our interpretation at this stage

The total number of new houses in Breckland will increase somewhat

The Government's new affordability factor will not be applied to housing allocation numbers

Saham Toney's minimum allocation will be 32-33 new homes

The site size limit of 5 houses may be deleted

Breckland's site allocation studies of 2014 & 2015 are no longer applicable

40% affordable housing is not viable

Heritage and ecology policies will be clarified and improved

More emphasis will be given to neighbourhood plans

Our settlement boundary will include Warwick Farm

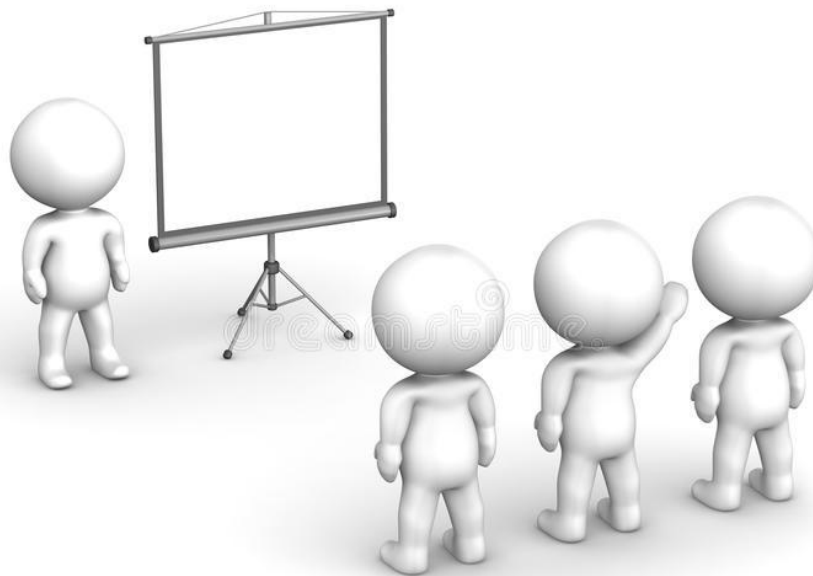
Things we learned from informal discussions with others attending

Swanton Morley's approach to housing for locals

Dereham Council buying up land to create a unified string of green spaces

LOCAL PLAN HEARINGS Q&A

Any questions or comments?



CONSULTANT'S REVIEW OF VIEWS

Why was it done and by who?

We hired a landscape architect to make a professional assessment of the public views we proposed

What did it involve?

Each viewpoint was visited and photographed, and a report was written

What were the results?

We lacked a definition of what constituted a communal – or key – view and need to expand our criteria in order to assess them properly

Landscape is too complex to assess by “tick boxes” and hence the views we’d chosen lacked evidence for their choice

Views exclusively of countryside – no buildings included

Views can change over time without being spoilt

Most important is landscape sensitivity vs capacity for development

Recommendation to widen the strategic gap in places

Recommendation to justify the gap using landscape sensitivity

Landscape is a much wider issue than just views

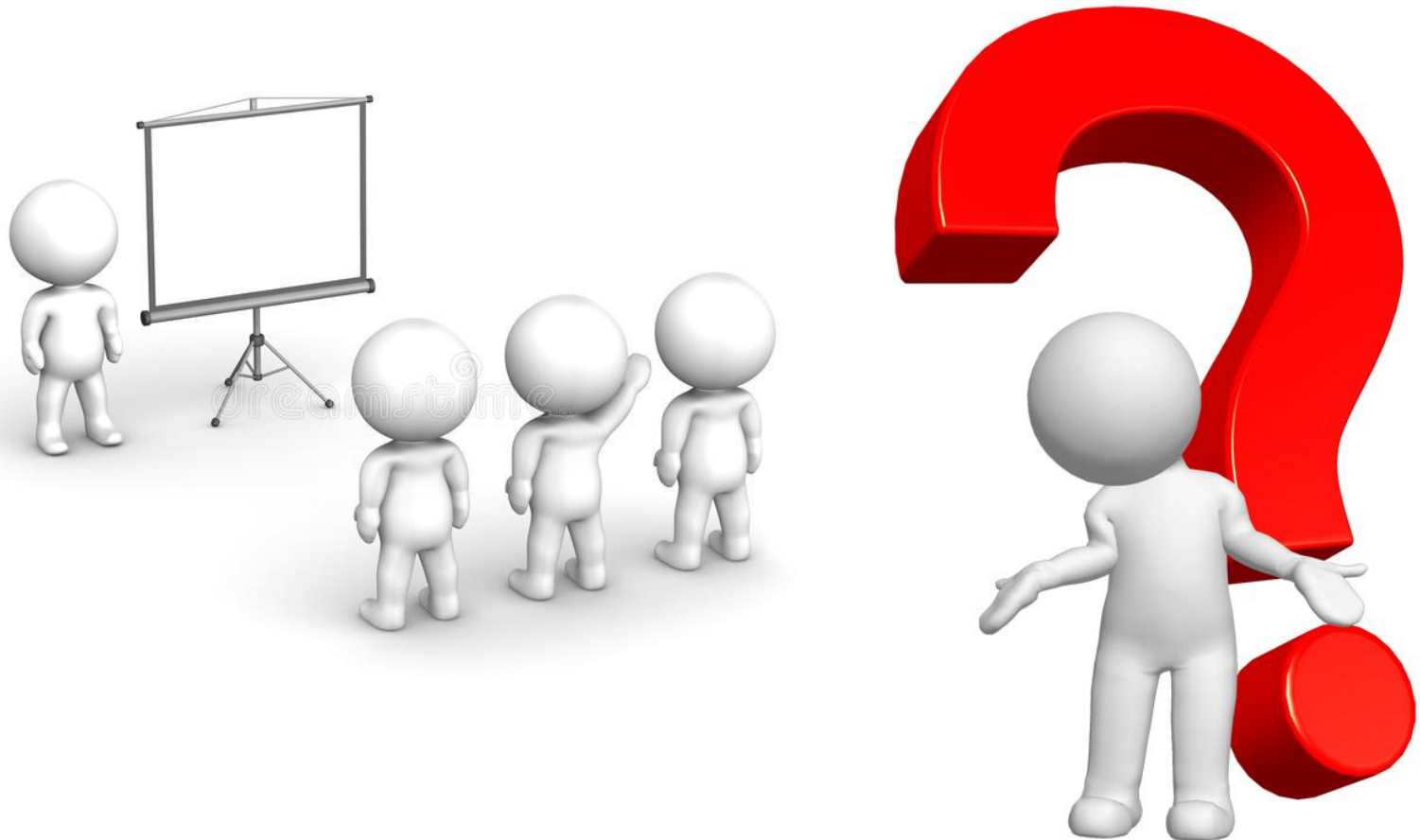
AS A RESULT WE WILL MAKE LANDSCAPE THE KEY FOCUS OF THE PLAN

PROPOSED DEFINITION OF A KEY VIEW

A Key View is one with a publicly accessible viewpoint that reflects the most distinct and unique characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area. It is memorable and appreciated, and evokes positive emotions. It encompasses an important feature of the village's settlement history and the way its landscape has been shaped by those who have lived and worked in it, and by nature. It may be said to be worthy of being illustrated in a photo, postcard or painting and as such would best represent a special element of the village's identity.

REVIEW OF COMMUNAL VIEWS Q&A

Any questions or comments?



OTHER WORK & EVENTS

Meeting with George Freeman MP and parliamentary debates on neighbourhood planning

Involvement with planning applications and informal consultation with landowners

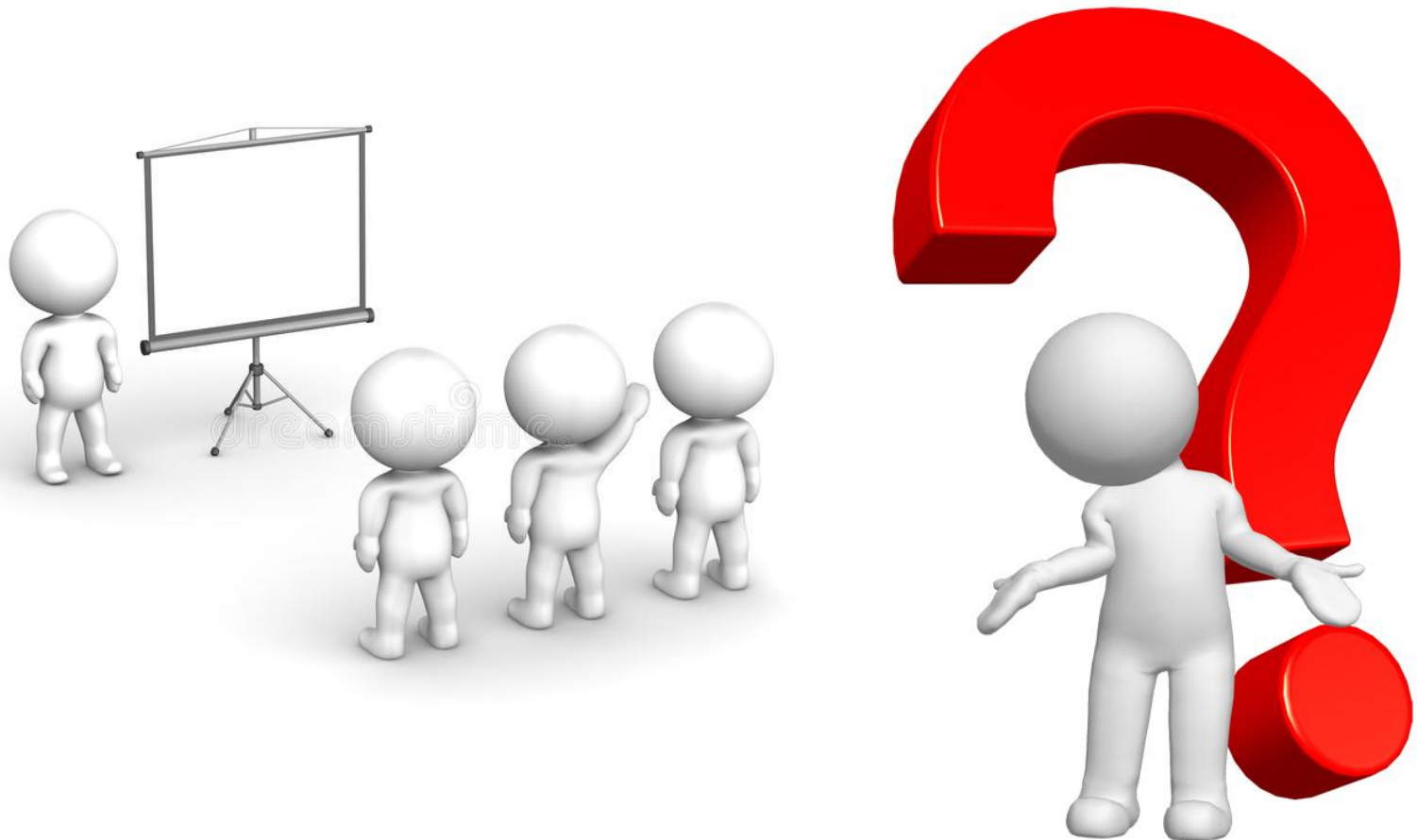
Submitted comments on the draft revision to the National Planning Policy Framework

New and improved relationship with Breckland planners



WORK SINCE CONSULTATION Q&A

Any questions or comments?



MESSAGE FROM GEORGE FREEMAN MP



WHAT'S COMING NEXT



FURTHER GRANT APPLICATION

Why is this needed and who is it from?

Reminder - we take no money from Parish Council funds.

To date we've had 3 grants totalling £9,000 from Locality (a Government body) and another of £4,500 from Breckland Council. Up to end of July 2018 we have spent close to £8,000 of this, the bulk of it on consultants (review of the entire plan; health check and communal views assessments) and village events.

We estimate we need to spend close to £13,000 more to complete the Plan, including two important new pieces of work I'm going to explain shortly

$(£8,000 + £13,000) > (£9,000 + £4,500)$ hence we need another grant

The grant will be from Locality, which was set up by the Government to support and fund neighbourhood plans

MORE LOCAL PLAN HEARINGS

Why are they needed and when will they be?

During the original hearings there were a number of issues the Inspector felt Breckland Council had not addressed in sufficient detail or had provided confusing information

Realising those issues could not be quickly dealt with, he gave the Council time to do additional work

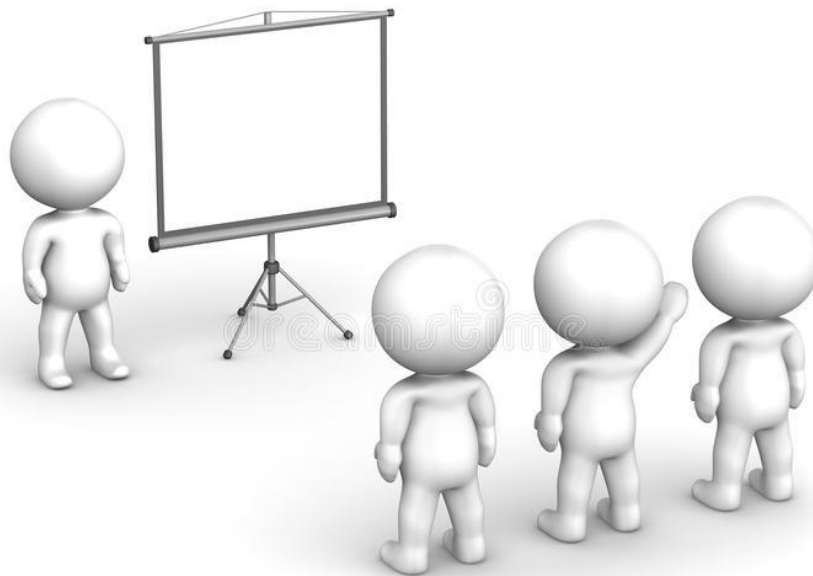
That work has been made available for consultation from 16 July – 28 August

Following consultation new hearings will run from 18th to 20th September

Of the 6 sessions, 4 are of interest to us – 3 on housing and 1 on the environment, and I will participate in those

GRANTS & THE LOCAL PLAN Q&A

Any questions or comments?



BIODIVERSITY MAPPING

Why is this needed; who will do it and when?

The current plan includes a wildlife protection policy and a map showing where various species have been sighted

A few people commented that the map was inaccurate in places, although that's disputed

We continue to collect data – AND WELCOME MORE FROM YOU – but feel having maps made by specialists should overcome any disagreements

We have agreed with the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service they will do this

They have an extensive database of information

They are currently completing wildlife mapping for the whole of Norfolk

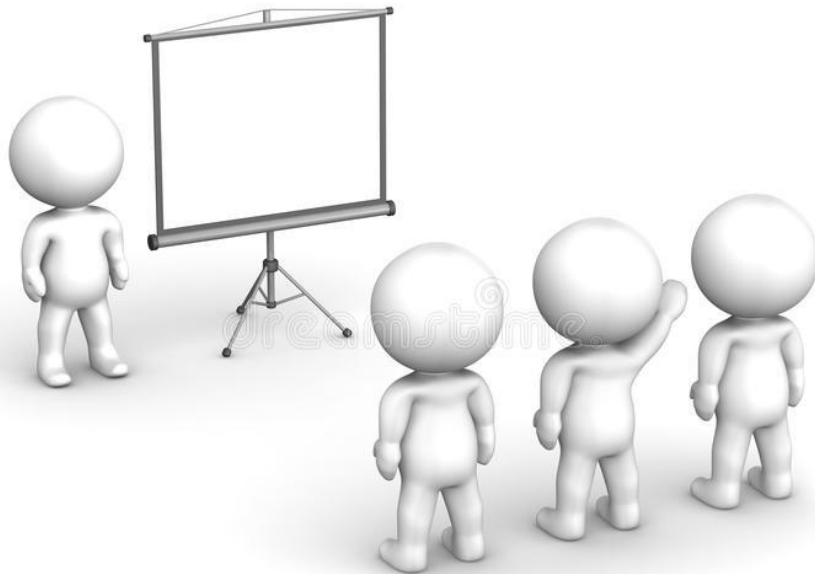
By waiting, we get the benefit of that work

Hopefully they'll start around the end of August

They always welcome more data – remember the 4 “W’s” if you send them some

BIODIVERSITY MAPPING Q&A

**Any questions or comments?
Or information?**



VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - 1

What is it and why are we doing it?

A number of our policies have not been fully accepted:

Strategic gap / Local green spaces / Communal views / Design

We've understood that landscape is more than just the countryside; it includes the village's history and buildings, and the three interact

We aim for the “right homes in the right places” but have struggled to define what that really means

Consultant explained the importance of understanding landscape sensitivity

Although village character is inherent to the Plan it's not fully defined, nor used to dictate policies that conserve and safeguard it – how to do that?

Every planning decision should be made based on impact to the village's character

This will all come together in a village character assessment

VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - 2

Village Development History Highlights

Farmers here 6,000 years ago

An important settlement for both the Icenis and the Romans, who built 2 forts here

In the past Watton Brook was much larger, and navigable by boats.

The layout of our roads can mostly be traced back at least 2,000 years

For many years Saham was once more important than Watton

Our church evolved from earlier Saxon buildings dating back to the 7th century

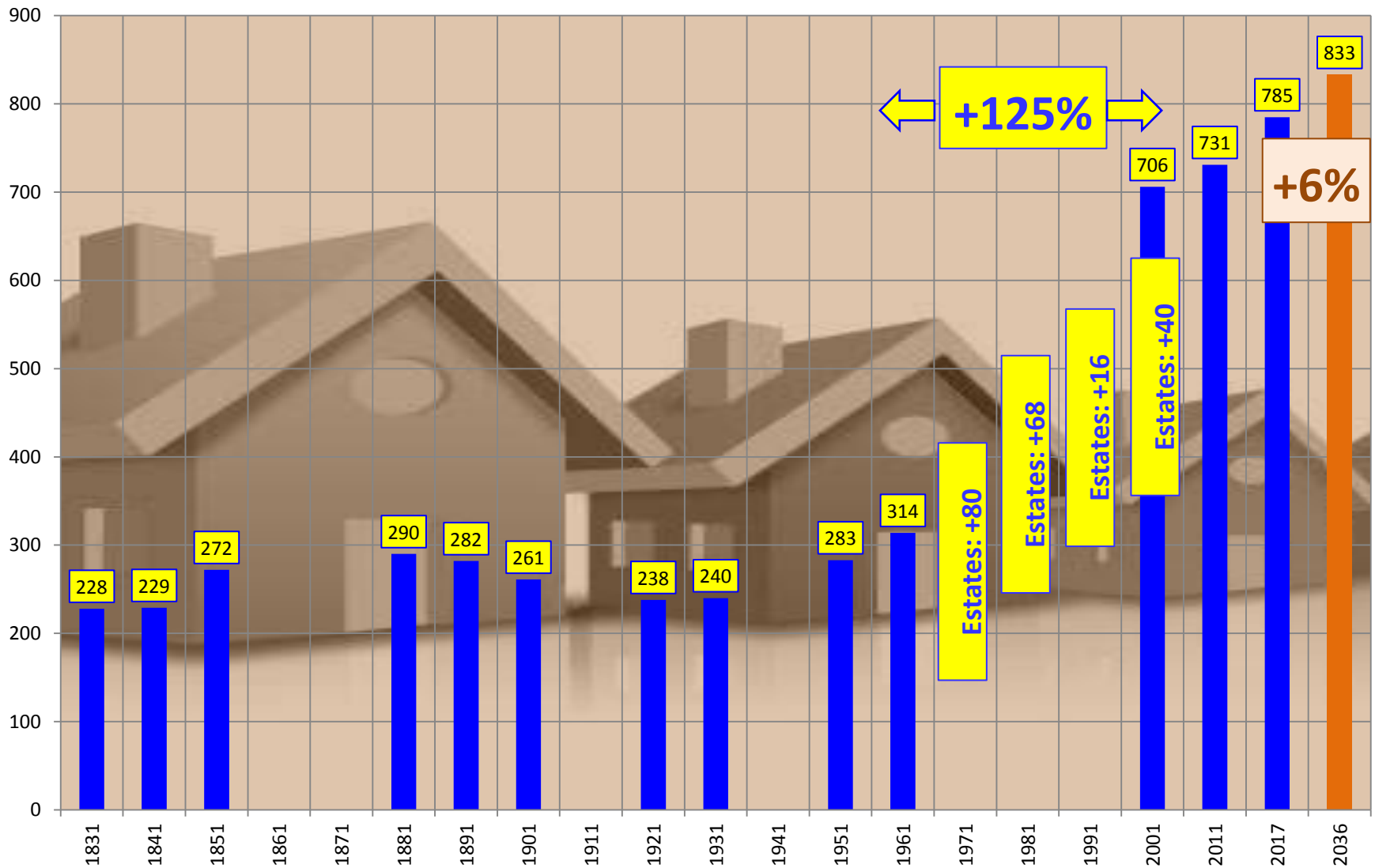
In 1612 we had the first village school in Norfolk

Till the mid-20th century roads were gravel tracks

No gas, electricity, running water or mains drainage till 30's and 40's

Greatest amount of development came between late sixties and late nineties

Village Growth: Number of Households 1831 - 2036



VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - 3

Who will be doing it and when?

It will be done by our landscape consultant, Lucy Batchelor-Wylam

Following PC approval of the work, we have just submitted the grant application

Exact timing depends on us receiving a new grant to pay for the work, but we hope Lucy can start in mid-September

Including preparation of reports and recommendations, the work is expected to take about 6 weeks

A VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT - 4

What will it involve and how will we use the information?

We will provide historical background information

The parish will be assessed and divided into landscape character areas

The sensitivity of each area to housing development will be defined

Sensitivity will show how each area could accommodate change without undue detrimental effect, by evaluating visual sensitivity and landscape value

An analysis of village character will lead to a comprehensive design guide for future developments that will include both desirable and non-desirable features

Key views will be reassessed and justified

Stronger justification for the strategic gap will be provided

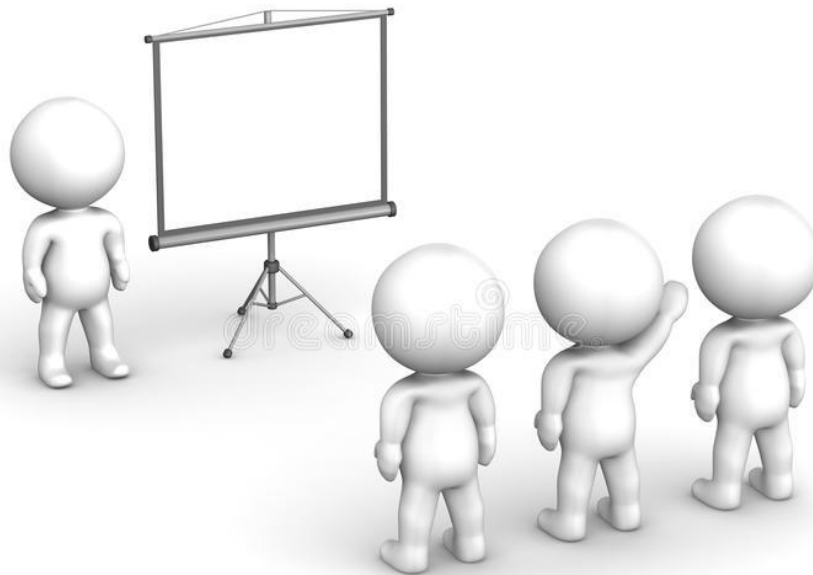
Recommendations for new policy criteria to better conserve our landscape will be made

Landscape sensitivity will be a key factor in site allocations

VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Q&A

Any questions or comments?



SITE ALLOCATIONS - 1

Why are we doing it?

The Plan's basic aim is to ensure the *right homes are built in the right places at the right times* – and not to allow the reverse

But at present we don't have full control over this

The Local Plan dictates in general where houses can be built, but without any firm basis for that

Planners / the Breckland planning committee have the final decision

While Breckland Council want to limit new housing to a precise maximum we've been advised they will find that almost impossible to do

Lack of a 5 year supply of housing land in Breckland weakens our policies

We can address these problems by allocating sites in our Plan.

The Parish Council has approved that, and we will start the process in a few days time

SITE ALLOCATIONS - 2

Advantages of allocating sites

Certainty for all about where new housing will – and will not be allowed

Objective process will overcome the emotion that applications attract

Conservation of the best features of village character will be a key criteria

Unlikely a site not allocated would later get permission

Allocated sites will get permission more easily

Instead of the 5 year land supply rule, for the first 2 years of the Plan we will be subject to a 3 year supply rule – so less loopholes for developers

Developments can be phased over time, rather than all in the early years

All three of our consultants support our approach

The only way to ensure the right houses in the right places at the right times

SITE ALLOCATIONS - 3

Potential pitfalls of allocating sites

Can be a contentious or divisive topic within a community

Developers may challenge the process in court and get policies thrown out

Ensuring all those who wish to propose sites are aware

Making sure the whole process is fair and transparent

Sites previously proposed to Breckland will need reassessment if put forward again

Possible delay to finalising the Plan

Missing any individual or group in consultation

SITE ALLOCATIONS - 4

What will it involve?

Issue a call for sites: this will be open for two months

Publicise it on our website (and hopefully BC's), in Saga, at PC meetings, on posters, and by writing to landowners / developers who are based outside the village

Collate all information received and clarify proposals

In parallel get approval for a “technical support package” from Locality for an independent group (AECOM) to assess each site proposed

Agree with AECOM local assessment criteria to be added to their standard form

AECOM assess all sites for suitability independently of us and send us a report

Establish the most preferred sites to meet our housing allocation

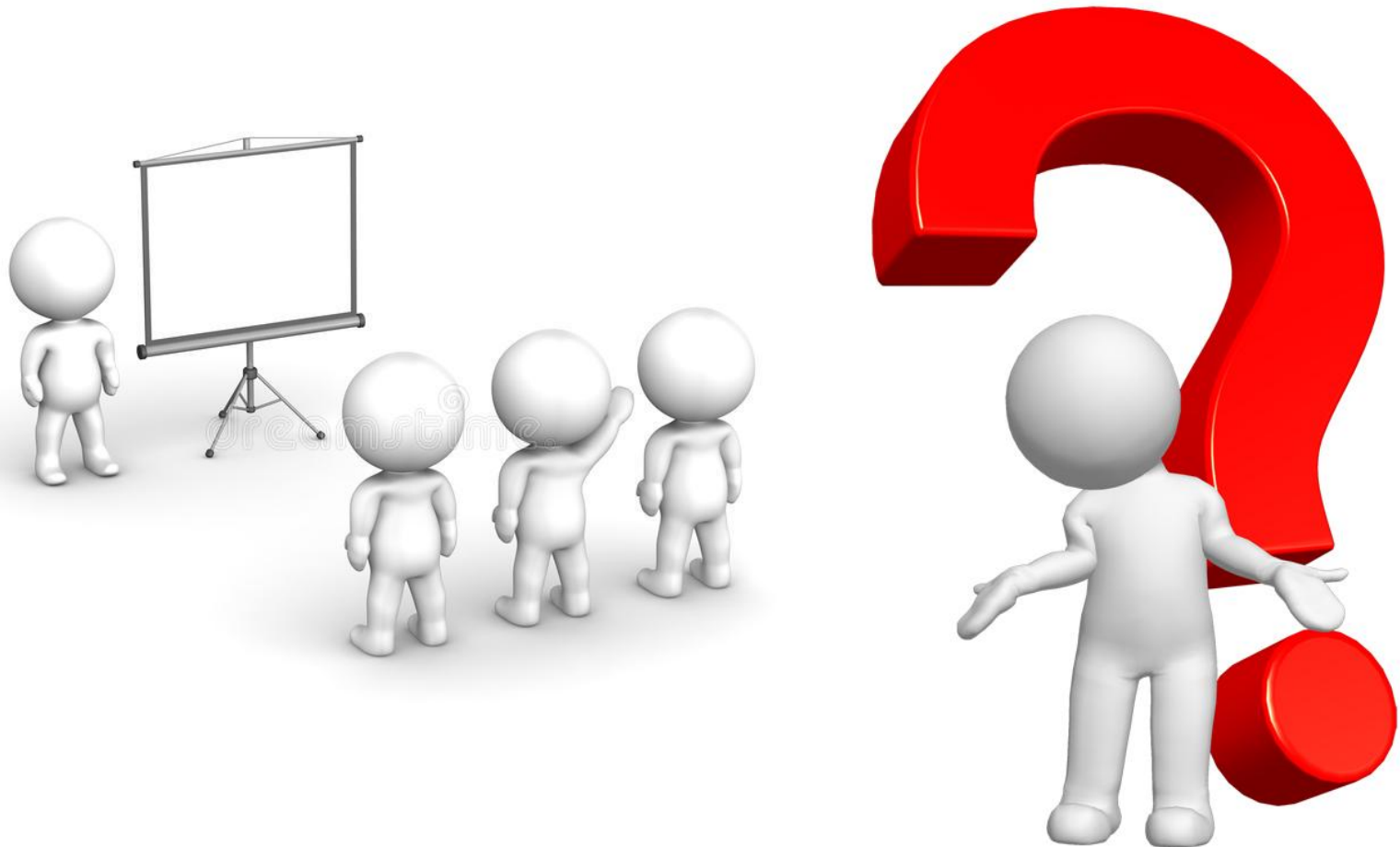
Define criteria for the granting of future planning permission to each site

Add new site allocation policies to the Plan

CONSULT WITH EVERYONE AT ALL STAGES

SITE ALLOCATIONS Q&A

Any questions or comments?



Repeat of the Reg. 14 consultation

Regulation 14 denoted the first official submission of the Plan for public consultation

Why is this needed?

When we update the Plan it will adhere to the principles we have followed throughout

But it will include new material on village character and site allocations

Both are major issues and quite complex

We consider everyone should have another chance to comment on the changes

As always, comments will help improve what we do

When will it be?



Very approximately we think:

Village character assessment by end October

Site assessments by end November

Plan updated by end December

Repeat consultation mid-January – end February

What else will we be doing?

Incorporating comments from first consultation, where agreed

Informal meetings with Breckland planners

Reviewing planning applications

Keeping you informed

Ever more research

Addressing requirements of the new national planning rules (NPPF)

Drafting new documents needed for the final submission

- ❖ Consultation Statement

- ❖ Basic Conditions Statement

IS THE END IN SIGHT?

We've decided it's best not to finalise our Plan before the Local Plan is approved

The latest information we have is that might be in April 2019

Aim to repeat our consultation by end February

Then perhaps 6-8 weeks to update things based on comments

Assess final version of Local Plan for any changes – say a month

Submit final version to Breckland Council end May

Council organises another 6 week consultation till around end-July

Independent examination by say end-September

Village referendum – perhaps a month to organise

If vote is “Yes” Plan approved (Made) – perhaps another month

SO PERHAPS NOVEMBER 2019

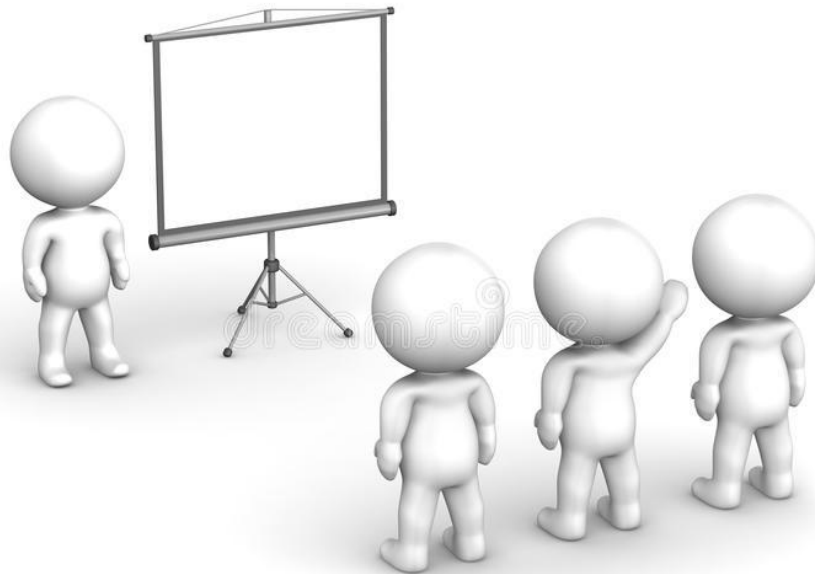
Alternate: Don't undertake new work: don't wait for Local Plan

Then perhaps complete 6 -7 months earlier

**BUT WE THINK QUALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT
THAN THE FINISH DATE**

**Any overall
questions or
comments?**

**How would you like
to be informed /
involved?**





**Thanks for
coming!**

**See you again on 7th
December**

www.stnp2036.org