

**RESPONSES OF BUGBROOKE PARISH COUNCIL TO THE CONSULTATION
DOCUMENT “INTERIM HOUSING PLANNING POLICY”**

1. While the Council accepts that the points awarded to Bugbrooke in the Village Sustainability Matrix reflect the facilities within Bugbrooke, it wishes to point out:
 - The percentages set by SNC for the level of future development could logically be formulated on a sliding scale so that, for example, there is not a leap from 5% to 10%. (See paragraph 3b.)
 - There is no library in Bugbrooke, in contrast to the other three Most Sustainable Villages. Any new development should cater for a new permanent library.
 - The village is not on a major road and this will restrict the number of dwellings which can be accommodated in the village.
 - Village schools are oversubscribed and any new development must provide for this to be remedied.
 - There are no available brownfield sites within the village (other than the Unusual Rigging site, which has the benefit of a permission for employment uses, and which is being underutilised at present). To remain sustainable, employment uses should be provided in this area.
 - The public transport service is poor. If new development is to take place, an improved bus service to Northampton must be provided, together with a new service to Towcester and Milton Keynes.

2. The Council has considered the options put forward by South Northants District Council and has the following comments:
 - Option 1 is unacceptable, owing to the fact that there is a real risk of any refusal by SNC being overturned on appeal.
 - Option 2 is regarded as the most viable of the alternatives, with the comments and qualifications set out in paragraph 3 below.

- Option 3 is unacceptable owing to the uncertainty as to which sites might be targeted, leading to a possible lack of control which could be exercised by SNC, with the danger of overdevelopment.
- The affordable housing policy as worded is not acceptable, and the council considers that affordable housing should be provided in a village where a need can be demonstrated, regardless of whether there are suitable sites in neighbouring villages.

3. With regard to Option 2, the Council considers as follows:

- i. The second bullet point, that the suitability of any proposed village boundary extension must be demonstrated by reference to existing boundaries and features, is agreed, though the council is concerned that the test might be capable of wide interpretation, leading to uncertainty. With regard to Bugbrooke, there are no logical sites adjacent to the existing village boundaries, all of which have all been previously infilled. The parish council would therefore expect to be consulted, and to be invited to advise SNC in general, as to the most appropriate locations for any new development. When the interim policy has been adopted, the parish council will seek a meeting with the planning officer to discuss this matter further.
- ii. The percentages set by SNC for the level of future development could logically be formulated on a sliding scale, based on the fact that there are villages of intermediate sustainability, which do have some facilities and are fairly highly rated in the Matrix. It is considered that if this were done, the development levels could be more fairly distributed among the higher-scoring villages. The next percentage rated below 10% could, for instance, be 8%, and this could take into account that Bugbrooke is short of some of the facilities which benefit the villages which rate above it. It will be required, as a larger village, to provide more units (at 10% of the total number of existing houses) than smaller villages which would be required to supply fewer units but could have a higher score in the matrix, so should perhaps be required to supply more units.

- iii. The requirement on developers to satisfy all three criteria in order to obtain permission for a higher number of dwellings, must be firmly held to. It is likely that the requirement for local support might be dispensed with and the parish councillors are concerned to ensure that this is a material consideration in such cases.
- iv. The requirement that 50% of all units should be affordable housing would be unacceptable, if by “affordable housing” is meant housing provided and managed by RSLs or other social housing providers. This amount of social housing could in extreme cases lead to social engineering. Instead, a wide mix of open market housing should be built, including low cost open market housing. The percentage of social housing should be between 35% -40%. There should also be a requirement that, as far as is practicable, affordable housing should be pepper-potted throughout the developments.

Bugbrooke Parish Council

26th May 2009