

Neighbourhood Planning Summary Report

Members of the NPWG, the Parish Clerk and Ian Poole (Places4People) met with West Suffolk planning officers, Anne-Marie Howell & Samantha Robertson on 30th September and key points of the meeting are summarised below:

Preferred Options reply to latest consultation.

- West Suffolk had received only 38 comments about Wickhambrook on the Preferred Options consultation papers – and many of these were from the same person commenting in two sections. This was a far lower response rate than for Issues and Options.
- Key points from those 38 comments included: nine comments suggesting that 40 is too many houses; eight comments noting concerns about infrastructure; seven comments against site 4.12a; and nine comments in favour of that site
- The proposal for 40 houses in Wickhambrook in the coming 20 years is set out in West Suffolk's Local Plan development as a minimum. Planners emphasised that this is a reasonable total given that some local service centres have been allocated more than 100 houses in the same period. 40 houses in 20 years represents about half the rate of new building that has occurred in Wickhambrook in the last ten years. We also noted that the total of 40 houses could increase if there are successful 'windfall' applications to build individual homes on small sites within the settlement boundary in the coming years, although the Neighbourhood Plan will help to manage and control this type of development.
- Subject to West Suffolk Councillors approval, planners will be proceeding with site 4.12a as their preferred option site in the further development of the Local Plan and will not be looking at any other sites. If Wickhambrook now initiates plans for building on a different site, there will be a danger of opening up two or more sites for development meaning that the village will get much more than the 40 houses.
- We are invited to look again at the question of 'mixed use' development on site 4.12a. If we wish to reject the mixed-use proposal, we will need evidence to show lack of support and lack of need.
- West Suffolk confirmed that up to 40% of the homes built on any site should be 'affordable' according to current West Suffolk policy. Our development brief can insist that affordable houses on site 4.12a include homes for rent, shared ownership and purchase. If these 16 dwellings, then meet the local need for ten affordable homes for local people demonstrated in the recent housing needs survey, there will be no need to open up a further site under the rural exception site scheme. **Action:** to look into the possibility of establishing a Community Land Trust to manage part of site 4.12a and to ensure that these (or a proportion of) affordable homes are used for the benefit of local people on an ongoing basis.
- West Suffolk aim to have final draft plan considered by their Councillors in March 2023 with consultation likely to commence in May.
- West Suffolk have advised the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood plan keeps pace with this plan

The NPWG meet on 24th October, key points in addition to those above are summarised below

- Instruct AECOM to start to develop a master plan for preferred options site 4.12a. AECOM will be asked to propose 2 initial options one with mixed use & the other without. The parish will be consulted on both proposals in Early January 2023
- NPWG will need to engage with the Landowner on the Development Plan for preferred options site 4.12a, this meeting to be scheduled at earliest convenience
- Landscape survey is expected to be completed by end of 2022

- Places4People will start to draft the Neighbourhood plan document
- NPWG will start to gather photos of green spaces, significant buildings, ancillary buildings, general photos of the village all for inclusion in the plan document
- NPWG will consider the community actions required for inclusion into the plan
- NPWG will start to plan the consultation events in January 2023

I met with Ian Poole and the clerk on 16th November where we discussed a timeframe for future work including community engagement events and the consultation on the draft NP, summarised below:

Activity	When	Notes
1 st Engagement with landowner of site 412a	December	Chair of NPWG & NP Consultant Places4People The purpose of this meeting is simply to set out West Suffolk's Preferred Option (mixed use) and update on NPWG work in progress (Master planning options and Landscape Appraisal)
Landscape Survey	By end of 2022	This work is being completed by a consultant
Developing Community Actions	By end of 2022	*
Consultation events on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • options from Master planning • presentation of landscape survey • feedback on progress in preparing NP 	January 2023	We plan to offer 3 two hour events at different times and on different days to try and attract as wide an audience as possible
Consider developing the Community Land Trust approach to affordable housing within site 412a	January 2023	Places4People have identified a Housing Association with experience of working with Community Land Trusts. Invite them to present at January parish council meeting.
Parish Council to adopt/approve Draft Neighbourhood plan prior to formal consultation.	Late February/Early March	Either the ordinary meeting on 23 rd February or an extra-ordinary meeting in early March
Formal Consultation	Six Weeks from early April (Depending on timing, it may be necessary to extend the consultation to take account of public holidays)	Commences 4 weeks after approval by PC to allow for preparation of materials, messaging, events. This would include a drop in event at the start of the consultation and ideally one midway through which could be the Annual Parish Meeting.

1. *These are non-planning matters that will address issues raised by residents in the Household Survey.

The anticipated consultation period is likely to coincide with Easter, Spring bank holiday(s) and the run up to the parish and district elections on 4th May. The pre-election period (six weeks prior to elections, also known as 'purdah'), when specific restrictions on communications activity are in place for local authorities is likely to run across this consultation period and the clerk will provide further advice on this at the January meeting.

West Suffolk Council asked us to look again at the question of 'mixed use' development on site 4.12a before rejecting it. The NPWG has considered this in its meetings and has not been able to identify evidence demonstrating either a lack of support for, or lack of demand for mixed use. Some of the responses to both the Household Questionnaire (and West Suffolk's initial Issues and Options consultation) did in fact appear to support limited mixed use on any site identified for development.

By accepting a mixed-use model on site 412a (as identified by West Suffolk), options to provide services for the parish as a local service centre over the next 20 years could be opened up.

On the advice of our consultant, Places4People, the group considers that restricting any mixed use to Class E (Commercial, Business & Services) Planning Use would be a reasonable compromise. The full list of uses under this class is attached as **Appendix A**, a brief summary below sets out some of the activities which would be allowed:

- a café and/or shop
- financial, professional and commercial services – an admin hub
- a gym
- medical support services (e.g. optometrist, audiologist, chiropodist, chiropractor)
- creche, day nursery or day centre
- developing products and services (e.g. artisan makers)

All of the above could be accommodated in small units.

The grant applied for and awarded in September covers work up to and including preparation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Due to restrictions on funding allocations (£10,000 in any application), funding for pre-submission of NP consultation, submission to West Suffolk and Post Examination (expected to be in the region of £6,500) will need to be applied for separately). There is a reasonable expectation that government funding through Locality/Groundworks will continue for parishes working through the process, but this is not guaranteed. The clerk has identified £3000 in earmarked reserves (Cemetery Extension Project) which could be drawn on if required and will look at other options for funding any shortfall in the next financial year.

Action: The parish council note the proposed timetable of actions and initial approach by NPWG and its consultant to the landowner of the allocated site 412a.

Recommendation:

The parish council accept West Suffolk Council's preferred option for site 412a to be developed on a mixed use basis, restricted to Planning Use Class E – Commercial, Business and Service.

WPC.22.11.02 – Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr T Turner

November 2022

USE CLASS E – COMMERCIAL, BUSINESS AND SERVICE

Class E is use for the following purposes:

E (a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food

E (b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises

E (c) Provision of:

(i) Financial services,

(ii) Professional services (other than health or medical services), or

(iii) Other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality

E (d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms)

E (e) Provision of medical or health services (except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner)

E (f) Creche, day nursery or day centre (not including a residential use)

E (g) Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity:

(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions,

(ii) Research and development of products or processes

(iii) Industrial processes

New Class E uses benefit from permitted development rights that include:

- Changes to use class C3 (dwellinghouses) subject to prior approval
- Changes to a mixed use for anything within Class E and as up to two flats subject to prior approval
- ... and back again
- Change to a state funded school or back to a previous lawful use

For further details, including any limitations (e.g. floorspace limits), restrictions, conditions etc. refer to the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).