

Chedburgh Parish Council

MINUTES

of a Meeting held electronically by Zoom on

Monday 14th December 2020 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Sue Roberts (Chair), Jon Cardy, Mike Chester, Teresa Landymore, and Margaret Rickard

In attendance: Maximilian Clay (Clerk to the Council);

23. Apologies

None - as all councillors were present.

24. Declarations of Interest

- a. There were no declarations of Pecuniary Interest in matters on this agenda.
- b. There were no declarations of Other Disclosable Interest in matters on this agenda.

25. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th September 2020 were agreed to be a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them as such.

26. Public Forum

No matters were raised by members of the public.

27. Local Development Draft Plan - Response to Consultation

There was lengthy and wide-ranging discussion following which it was resolved to make a response in line with the attached letter, which forms part of these minutes.

In closing the meeting at 9:17pm, the Chair thanked everyone for their close attention to the complex debate and for their contributions.

Signed as a true record by authority and on behalf of the Council:

..... Chair

..... Date

Chedburgh Parish Council

Clerk: Maximilian Clay

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Planning Policy Team
West Suffolk Council

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15th December 2020

Dear Planning Policy Team

Re: Local Development Draft Plan - Response

The Parish Council met last night to discuss the Draft Plan and, following lengthy and interesting discussion submits the following comments for consideration:

- a. Growth Distribution Models** - On balance the Council felt that a dispersed model of growth distribution was preferable. However, it was noted that a dispersed model could tend to urbanise what is a notably rural and agricultural district, more than either a new settlement or expansion of existing towns and therefore believes that great care is needed in the allocation and management of development as well as design issues.
- b. Designation of Village as Type A** - Consideration of the fundamental criteria used to designate smaller villages as either Type A or Type B led the Council to question the Type 'A' designation allocated to Chedburgh. Furthermore, when comparing Chedburgh with similar villages, such as its immediate neighbour Chevington (which is designated Type B), the Council found it difficult to understand how the minor differences (weighing on both the positive and negative) justify a different designation.

The Draft Plan states that Type 'A' villages "have a more limited range of services [than Local Service Centres] but can still meet some of the day to day needs of their residents and/ or lie within two kilometres of a town with the opportunity for sustainable access."

Type 'B' villages "have a very limited range or no services and poor accessibility to public transport. It is likely that residents will rely on the private car to travel to meet their day to day needs. These sites have a boundary but no sites will be allocated through the local plan."

We feel that the Type 'A' designation may be a hang-over from the old framework and from outdated information arising from when Chedburgh had a school, a pub, better public transport and a shop. As such the village had an allocation of potential development sites which should no longer be relevant in the same way. In order to explore this further a direct comparison is helpful - the following table summarises the main differences between the two villages:

Service/ Facility	Chedburgh (Designated type A)	Chevington (Designated Type B)
Distance to Bury St E (Bus Station)	7.3 Miles	6.3 Miles
Pub	No	Yes
Pre-School Group (private)	Yes	No
School	No	No
Employment	Limited	Limited
Garage	No	Yes
Bus Service	Limited (the very same buses serve Chedburgh as Chevington)	Limited (the very same buses serve Chevington as Chedburgh)
Shop/ Post Office	No	No
Village Hall	Yes	Yes
<p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Chedburgh has a little more by way of employment activity but the overall level of employment is nonetheless limited and is considered to be of such low volume that it is highly unlikely that anyone moving to the village would be likely to gain employment within it. ◆ Chedburgh has a small privately run pre-school but no village-wide services other than the village hall (a feature of both villages but one that the Draft Plan discounts as a criterion for use in the designation process) whereas Chevington has a pub and a garage. ◆ The villages are identically placed in relation to the availability of public transport because the very same bus provision serves both villages. The journey to Bury St Edmunds from Chevington is 1 mile shorter than from Chedburgh. <p>The bus service to both villages is scant and unsuitable as a means for getting to work for all but those with a very traditional and regular 9 to 5 work pattern. This precludes many, possibly most people, travelling to work for the largest employers in the area such as in factories with early/late shift patterns, large food retailers, the construction industry or the NHS. Nor is the bus service helpful to those with working hours that vary from day to day or week to week (such as many of those working in larger retail outlets).</p>		

Furthermore a random sampling of other Type 'A' Villages reveals that their services are typically far more extensive and, in fact, in a different league from those pertaining to Chedburgh. For example:

- ◆ *Stoke by Clare* - village hall, pub, tennis club, bowls club, community shop, post office and independent school.
- ◆ *Stradishall* - pub, shop, cafe, garage and nursery school.
- ◆ *Risby* - primary school, pre-school, pub, nursing home and garden centre.
- ◆ *Barton Mills* - 2 pubs, petrol station, shop, wine merchant.
- ◆ *Fornham All Saints* - pub, village Hall, community centre, florist, restaurant/ take away.
- ◆ *Kentford* - stores and post office, 2 pubs, bicycle shop, petrol station, shop and a Veterinary Surgery.

In addition it is worth noting that the children of new residents to Chedburgh cannot be found primary school places in the schools in neighbouring villages and are having to be provided with private taxi transport to take the children to schools further afield.

The Council believes that Chedburgh should in fact be designated as a Type 'B' village and asks that the designation be reviewed in the next stage of the draft Plan, with a view to assigning Chedburgh as a Type 'B' village.

- c. **Settlement Profile and Potential Development Sites** - The Council offers the following comments in relation to the various sites identified by the SHELAA.

Sites that this Council Supports for Inclusion

Site WS065 - The Parish Council believes this to be the most suitable site for development, being within the settlement boundary, but it is noted that the following issues would need to be addressed:

- ◆ The highway (Queens Lane) is narrow and almost at capacity. With no obvious way of expansion the scale of any development (or aggregate of developments) needs to be limited.
- ◆ Queens Lane is liable to regular flooding, including sewage. Ongoing issues with pluvial drainage have added to the problem and so any development would need to address (or work in partnership with the relevant agencies to address) these issues and appropriate soakaways etc would need to be specified.
- ◆ High Speed Broad Band is not available on this stretch of the lane (despite information provided by BT to the contrary).

The Council sees this as a low-density site for a maximum of 10 units, ideally a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed houses, in support of both integration and the possibility of providing a proportion of affordable houses, of which the Council is strongly supportive.

Site WS061 - This site is felt to be the most suitable for larger scale development. However, part of it has recently been approved for light industrial use and it is felt that development of 50 to 60 units would be the maximum desirable, and possibly the maximum achievable.

The above two sites, if developed at the levels suggested herein, would increase the size of the village by over 20%. This is over and above the recent 20% expansion represented by the 50+ houses in the Mulberry Park development.

Sites Not Supported for Inclusion

In view of the facts set out in the foregoing paragraph, and the fact that the council does not see the other sites as either desirable or realistic, the Council feels that all the other sites should be removed from the SHELAA. Further comments on some of these sites are offered below.

Site WS064 - This site *appears* to be a logical extension of WS065 but would present access difficulties. Queens Lane, to the east, lacks capacity for any significant increase in the level of traffic (see overarching comments below). The Vendas Farm (NB not Vendors farm as shown on the map) concrete track to the west, which leads off Chevington Road is also very narrow and is hemmed in by drainage ditches and buildings and so would probably not be capable of providing a suitable access point. The Council believes that development here is unrealistic and is opposed to including this site in the potential development pool.

Site WS554 - This site is adjacent to site WS064 and the same problems and objections apply, amplified proportionately to the larger scale of this site. Being even further north along Queens Lane the problems of the narrowness of the lane are also even greater, as would be the impact on the countryside.

Sites WS063 and WS555 - These sites are adjacent to each other and close to WS554. As such the same problems and objections apply, amplified proportionately to the larger scale of this site.

Site WS566 - Development on this scale would intrude into completely open countryside and require major infrastructural development. In terms of highways, this is probably not achievable within the constraints of the village (see overarching comments below), but if it were achievable, it would overwhelm the village, almost doubling its size, and changing its fundamental character. The Council believes that development here is both highly undesirable and unrealistic and is opposed to including this site in the potential development pool.

Site WS060 - This site is impractical and undesirable for the same reasons relating to the impossibility of expanding the capacity of Queens Lane and the related issues set out under the Overarching Points section, immediately below.

d. Overarching Points (applying to the village as a whole)

Overall current viability of development: It should be noted that demand for houses in Chedburgh appears limited. Houses on the Brocket Park / Mulberry Place development (west of WS061) sold very slowly and at the time of writing, three years after completion, at least one house on that development is still on the market, having never been sold.

Traffic Levels: At peak times access onto the A143 can be difficult already. The Council feels that any large-scale development in or around the village would exacerbate this problem and would require careful thought as regards traffic management and road layouts.

Quiet Lanes: The village considers itself to be fortunate in its position in the midst of rolling agricultural farmland. In this context the Council is planning to propose that Queens Lane be designated a Quiet Lane. The lane forms an exceptionally attractive transition from the heart of the village, through its more sparsely developed margins and out into countryside - and on to the next village. Once beyond the established settlement boundary the lane narrows such that two cars travelling in opposite directions cannot pass each other and the road is incapable of expansion width ways. These factors need to be taken into account when considering development that would require access onto the lane.

Design: Design is a key consideration in any development. The Council would be strongly supportive of design guidelines that militate against the urbanising affect of identikit ranks of housing which may be suitable for edge-of-town developments but which undermine the rural character of villages.

All Other Sites - The Parish Council recognises the need for housing growth and is supportive of suitably sized and well-designed development. The Council believes that in identifying the sites listed under 'Sites that this Council Supports for Inclusion' above, as potentially the most suitable and achievable sites for development it has identified an adequate supply within the village on an at least 20 year view.

We hope that you will place due weight on our comments.

With kind regards,

Yours faithfully

Clerk to Chedburgh Parish Council