

# Barrow-cum-Denham Parish Council

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Strategic Planning Team  
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By email to [planning.policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Dear Sir/ Madam,

## **2019 SHELAA Consultation - Barrow-cum-Denham Parish Council feedback on initial draft**

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the above. I write as Chairman on behalf of Barrow-cum-Denham Parish Council; this letter having been unanimously approved by the Parish Council at a meeting on 20 November 2019. Our comments are structured as follows:-

1. Neighbourhood Plan
2. Constraints & housing numbers
3. Generally applicable issues & options:-
  - 3.1 Community sensitivity
  - 3.2 Prosperity, employment & transport
  - 3.3 Local geography
  - 3.4 Sewerage
  - 3.5 Heritage

### **1. Neighbourhood Plan**

The Barrow-cum-Denham Neighbourhood Plan began in June 2019 and is on-track for completion in 2020. A Housing Need Assessment, Heritage Assessment and First Consultation are underway.

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to carry out its own call for sites and evaluation. This work is yet to begin and the Parish Council's opinion will only be formed at the conclusion of such work. Any comments provided in this letter must not be taken as the Parish Council's definitive views on any sites but merely a timely response to the information requested by West Suffolk, based on information available to the Parish Council at the time of the request.

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Efforts on the emerging Local Plan should be cognisant of the Barrow-cum-Denham Neighbourhood Plan.

### 2. Constraints & housing numbers

In 2020, Barrow-cum-Denham will exceed the 2031 housing target from Rural Vision 2031 (RV2031). In other words, the parish is more than 10 years ahead of its planned growth. The parish's constraints remain substantially the same as when RV2031 was drafted. Accordingly, the current SHELAA's consideration of 7 new sites with the potential for 790 houses is **illogical and disproportionate** given the constraints, size of settlement and the scale and speed of recent development.

We understand that housing needs gradually evolve, but this would not explain the significant mismatch between RV2031's targets and a new Local Plan with targets for additional large-scale development in Barrow before 2031. Given this, we respectfully request West Suffolk Council to review Barrow's particular circumstances before the next revision of the SHELAA.

The following paragraphs in this section provide the relevant information for West Suffolk Council's consideration in such a review:-

RV2031 is based on site allocations from 2010 and SHELAA 2016. These found various constraints, summarised as :- "Growth in Barrow is fundamentally constrained to the north by the setting of the adjacent Scheduled Ancient Monument. Buffers between Barrow and the surrounding settlements of Denham and Burthorpe create constraints to developments to the east and south west." Further, paragraph 20.4 of RV2031 states that: "...the close proximity of the small settlements of Denham and Burthorpe should be protected from coalescence with Barrow." The Parish Council strongly supports this element of the policy and notes with concern that some of the proposed sites in the draft SHELAA erode the green gap between Barrow, Denham and Burthorpe.

During development of RV2031, UK Planning Inspectorate reviewed 5 potential sites:- The Green (29 houses); Land East of Barrow Hill ((WS014) 75 houses + 1 Ha business use); Land West of Barrow Hill (75 houses); Church Farm (135-190 houses) and Bury Road (75 houses).

Sites at The Green and Land West of Barrow Hill are built and occupied. A third site was considered at either Church Farm, Bury Road or Barrow Hill. (Barrow Hill (WS014) is now being built and scheduled for completion in 2020).

Paragraph 198 of the Inspectorate's Report on RV2031 states: *".....I find no reason to allocate either Church Farm or Bury Road site instead of the land at Barrow Hill. **There is no need to allocate them in addition: indeed to do so would compromise the proportionate growth of the village which the Rural Vision intends.**"*

In other words, UK Planning Inspectorate felt that only 3 sites were necessary to meet Barrow-cum-Denham's proportionate share of new housing by 2031:- The Green (29 houses), Land

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East of Barrow Hill (WS014 =75 houses + 1 Ha of business use) and Land West of Barrow Hill (75 houses). This totals **179 houses + 1 Ha of business use**.

The *actual* number, either built or being built, is greater than the Planning Inspectorate had considered:- The Green (40 houses), Land East of Barrow Hill (75 houses + 1 Ha of business use) and Land West of Barrow Hill (80 houses). Moreover, planning permission has been granted for change of use and development of a roughly 1Ha agricultural site on Barrow Hill for business use + 2 houses. Hence the actual total of allowed development under RV2031 in Barrow is **197 houses + approx. 2Ha of business use**.

RV2031 requires housing developments to be completed by 2031. The bulk of Barrow-cum-Denham's new housing is either already complete or due for completion in 2020. Clearly, The Planning Inspectorate believed that development over and above 179 houses + 1 Ha of business by 2031 would be **disproportionate** and hence counter to RV2031's intent. The Parish Council is concerned to note that West Suffolk Council does not seem to share the same logic.

In the interests of sustainability, viability of infrastructure and popular acceptance, our strong preference is that any future development is phased over the appropriate time-scales. We expect our Neighbourhood Plan to develop this theme in more detail.

### 3. Generally applicable issues & options:-

#### 3.1 Community sensitivity

Barrow's recent rapid growth has caused sensitivity to further large-scale development within the community. This has been highlighted at various parish council meetings during 2019. Some villagers have formed an action group - Barrow Ducks – aimed at fighting over-development and some residents have erected Barrow Ducks signs regarding "No New Town" etc. around the village. This has caused further friction within the community, particularly with those trying to sell their homes as potential purchasers are put off by the perception of looming large-scale development and implied hostility to newcomers.

#### 3.2 Prosperity, Employment & Transport

Barrow-cum-Denham is a reasonably prosperous parish with low levels of unemployment and deprivation. However, there are no large employers in the village and many residents work in Bury, Newmarket or Cambridge. Given the paucity of public transport, this typically requires commuting by car along the A14. The A14's importance is also the link to nearby rail stations, Felixstowe/Harwich ports and Stanstead airport. In turn, this means that the key traffic route within the village is the main north-south road (The Street & Colethorpe Lane) which joins the A14 north of the village.

The Street & Colethorpe Lane suffer from traffic congestion at the north of the village near the school when parents drop off or pick up their children. Cars parked along The Street and

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Colethorpe Lane reduce the main through road to a single lane. Occasionally, the road becomes congested if large lorries or agricultural vehicles, travelling in opposite directions, arrive at the start or end of the school day. Some residents complain about congestion and some have questioned whether emergency vehicles could make sufficiently speedy progress when congestion is at its peak.

### **3.3 Local geography – terrain**

The parish is unusually hilly for Suffolk and the surrounding landscape is beautiful. There are various scenic views across the valleys and fields particularly to the south, east and west of the village. To the east, scenic beauty is amplified with Wilsummer Wood - a large, natural wood with diverse and plentiful wildlife.

The soil is typically heavy clay, evidenced by numerous ponds around the parish. It is also evidenced by drainage problems on the village's roads when it rains. Current rainwater drainage is insufficient or problematic and any additional development should be planned so as not to exacerbate the drainage issues.

### **3.4 Sewerage**

On completion of the current construction site at Barrow Hill (WS014), the sewage works in Barrow will be at full capacity.

### **3.5 Heritage**

Barrow has a surprisingly large number of listed buildings and ancient monuments including:-

- Church of All Saints - Grade I listed building
- Church Farmhouse, Church Lane - Grade II listed
- Barrow Hall - Grade II listed
- Barrow School - Grade II listed
- Town Estate Rooms and No 34 The Street - Grade II listed
- Barrow House, No 8, The Green - Grade II listed
- Nos 12, 16, 20, 26, 29 & 30 The Green - Grade II listed
- Weeping Willow Public House, 39 Bury Road - Grade II listed
- Feltons Cottage, No 18 Bury Road - Grade II listed
- Gables Cottage, No 19 Bury Road - Grade II listed
- Old Lamb House & Lamb Cottage, Burthorpe Green - Grade II listed
- The Lodge, Colethorpe Lane - Grade II listed
- Frog Hall, Colethorpe Lane - Grade II listed
- War Memorial - Grade II listed
- K6 telephone kiosk, Brittons Road car park - Grade II listed

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- Wolfe Hall, Barrow Hill - Grade II listed.
- St Mary's Church, Denham - Grade II listed
- Denham Hall - Grade II listed
- Fish Ponds and Moat, Barrow Hall – Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Denham Hall Moat.

There is a further Scheduled Ancient Monument – Denham Castle – which lies just outside the parish boundary to the west of Barrow.

We are obliged for your consideration of the above prior to the next revision of the SHELAA.

Yours sincerely,

John Pearson  
Chairman Barrow-cum-Denham Parish Council