

OTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Mark Edgerley
Principal Planner
Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils
East Suffolk House
Station Road
Melton
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Dear Mark

'Suffolk Coastal Local Plan'-First Draft Local Plan July 2018 (Consultation 20th July-14th September 2018).

Otley Parish Council has now met and discussed the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. We have also met for a positive one to one with your colleagues Anthony Smith and Steve Taylor. Otley Parish Council held a Consultation meeting with the residents of Otley in order to gain further insight into the wants and needs of the village. This has been valuable in helping to put forward to you our vision of Otley's future. In response to the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan our comments are as follows.

Having considered your proposals SCLP 12.55 and 12.54, the Parish Council looked at all sites put forward within the SHELAA as well as alternative sites at Suffolk Coastal District Council's recommendation. As a result of our village consultation, we would like to suggest an alternative site. This can be identified on Map 1 as 'Alternative Suggested Site'. This proposed site is 2.58 hectares and the Parish Council propose a capacity of 40 houses. From consulting 136 residents of Otley, (48% of households), this particular site is the first choice for any possible development in the future. The residents of Otley and the Parish Council's preferred site would be located in the core of the village where by access to the amenities such as shop, post office, doctor's surgery and school are within the immediate vicinity. It was felt that this would help to enhance the sense of community by building a core in the middle of the village. This site also provides development without extending the footprint of the village.

A proposal of 40 houses in addition to the current permitted planning application of 35 houses (site 318a SHLAA 2015) will provide 75 of the required 540 houses Suffolk Coastal District Council has targeted for rural communities for the period of the Local Plan 2016-2036. For Otley to now be classified as a 'Large Village' has created an extremely high expectation of new housing development; one that the Parish Council and residents are not in favour of. This is 14% of SCDC's total i.e. in excess of an 8th of the total; however, there are 17 large villages. Otley is one of the smallest of those 17; the Parish

Council believe Otley is being targeted for a disproportionate number of housing units. We feel that the provision of 75 houses in the time plan timescale is more than sufficient to meet our obligations.

In order to support our position with 'alternative suggested site' please refer to figure 1 which provides you with the data collected from the resident questionnaire. This clearly shows an overwhelming 54% are in favour of this site. This site has the ability to provide maximum 12 houses within the settlement boundary and maximum 28 outside the settlement boundary. The Parish Council have attended the one to one session you offered, carried out two correspondence drops to residents within the village, distributed a resident questionnaire and collated the data, encouraged attendance to your public drop in sessions, met on four occasions to plan, execute and evaluate findings, held a Public Consultation meeting with a circa of 150 residents in attendance. All of which has accumulated evidence to consolidate our 'alternative suggested site' being the preferential choice of the village.

Further order of preference from our Consultation is site 98, site 1051 and site 1001 consecutively. (Site referencing taken from 'Issues and Options for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review August 2017'). Site 98, site 1051 and site 1001 also offer a similar number of houses but the Parish Council's 'alternative suggested site' is the preferred site of the village. Site 1051 has policy to be a cluster development.

On behalf of the village, Otley Parish Council are unable to support your preferred sites of SCLP 12.55 or SCLP 12.54 are the best locations for potential future housing growth for the village. Residents do not look upon these sites favourably due to the locations being on the edge of current settlement boundary opposed to creating a core 'hub' in a more central location.

- For site SCLP 12.55, over 50% of the questionnaire responses stated 'no' this was not a site preference. This site would not enhance or maintain the vitality of our rural community. This site was originally suggested as having 66 houses and although has been reduced is a concern that at a later date is more likely to be increased. Site SCLP12.55 would impact on residential amenity as the quality of life for 11 households on the adjacent road Newlands would have a loss of outlook, loss of privacy, loss of sunlight. All of which have a negative impact on their quality of life.(Policy SCLP 11.2)
- For site SCLP 12.54, 68% of residents are against development on this site. It provides beautiful greenery as a meadow, spring flowers and grazing for sheep. The village strongly recognises the visual beauty this area of the village offers and therefore undoubtedly does not want this destroyed and lost forever. This is also reflected in your policy SCLP 10.1 Additional traffic on the adjacent road- Helmingham Road would exacerbate the concern for speeding traffic which is already reflected in the reports our speedwatch volunteers regularly gather. Therefore, creating an adverse impact on existing transport networks. (Policy SCLP 7.1 g)

With regard to the development the correct type of housing is crucial to meet the needs of the village. The results express a clear desire for 2 and 3 bedroom homes that are affordable for local people. (see fig. 2) Our questionnaire shows a 59% need for bungalows which we interpret as a desire for housing for the elderly. Otley has a mixture of age ranges within the village but a significant proportion of residents are 'within older years'. These requests support SCDC housing policies. The type of potential new housing on the 'Alternative Suggested Site', we believe can support the SCDC policy which states that 'housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and that plans should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services'. We believe this site can achieve this aim.

The Parish Council recommend that development policy setting for our suggested alternative site will be expected to accord with the following criteria:

- Provision of housing suitable for low cost starter homes.
- Provision of suitable housing to meet the needs of older people i.e. bungalows.
- Provision for dwellings to meet the requirements to be accessible and adaptable.
- Provision of semi-detached housing that is no less than 30% of the development.
- Provision of 2 or 3 bedroom housing opposed to larger houses.
- Provision of a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site which provides for the retention of trees and hedgerows along the east and west boundaries.
- Provision to provide a contribution towards improvement of current open space and recreational and community facilities within the village under policy SCLP8.2
- Provision of traffic calming measures within the village.
- Developers will need to demonstrate there is adequate infrastructure of drainage, water supply network, electricity supply, high speed broadband or that it can be made available under policy SCLP 3.6
- The design and layout of houses to be sympathetic to current design of housing in the village.
- Provision of adequate off road parking and gardens for each property.

Otley is defined by its rural beauty and the village must be allowed to continue providing an effervescent landscape. 89% of villagers value the access to the countryside as something important to Otley. This was very closely followed by 88% saying the village atmosphere was important to them. (see fig 3). Otley is a village with community spirit and cohesion. It is a village that has a strong identity. Therefore, it is paramount that Otley remains a village and doesn't escalate into a small town. The benefits of living in a village compared to a town must be retained long term. The tremendously positive response rate from villagers to the Parish Council, regarding this process, confirms how important it is to ensure the strengths and wishes of Otley are preserved. We hope that decisions made by SCDC are respectful of the views we have expressed on behalf of the village.

Otley Parish Council would like to thank you and the members of your team for the opportunity to be consulted with the evolution of the Local Plan. We trust that our comments will be taken into consideration within the consultation and look forward to remaining in close dialogue with you regarding any progress.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs I Lincoln
Vice Chair
On behalf of Otley Parish Council.