

Examination Breckland District Local Plan 2011-2016)

Written Statement Issues and Matters.

Dereham Town Council

The Town Council would like to participate at the Hearing on this Matter.

Matter 9 - Economic Development

9.1

With respect to Dereham, the figure is not justified nor based on robust evidence. The 2013 study was carried out before the announcement of the completion of the duelling of the A47 between Dereham and Norwich and before the announcement of Norfolk County Council's intention to construct a link from the A47 to the new Northern Distributer Road. These are major infrastructure projects which will have significant impacts on Dereham. If these improvements had not come forward, then a 5-year-old study may have been acceptable but, given the magnitude of the proposed new road infrastructure, it is felt that the employment land study is not sufficiently up to date.

The employment study used a retirement age of 65 to calculate the projected size of the workforce. State pension will increase to 67 early in the plan period, which does not appear to have been taken into account in the calculations. The effect of this increase in pension age could add several thousand people to the overall workforce. The evidence, therefore is not robust.

9.6

As stated in 9.1, with respect to Dereham, the figure is not justified nor based on robust evidence. The 2013 study was carried out before the announcement of the completion of the duelling of the A47 between Dereham and Norwich and before the announcement of Norfolk County Council's intention to construct a link from the A47 to the new Northern Distributer Road. These are major infrastructure project which would have significant impacts on Dereham

Dereham originally had an additional allocation for employment land off Rashes Green. This has subsequently been lost to a housing development, but no new employment land allocation has been made. The fact that Dereham and Swaffham are both planned to grow by similar levels of dwellings but Dereham's employment land allocation is one third of Swaffham's allocation has not been explained or supported by evidence.

Two of the allocated residential sites; Allocation 2 and the eastern part of D1 (carried over from the LDF) are currently providing employment and operated by viable business but no account has been made of this loss of employment land when allocating employment land in Dereham.

The remaining allocation, D5, is currently prevented from being developed as there is a lack of access due to a ransom a strip and it is understood that the owner is no longer prepared to promote the site for employment use. The cost of the ransom strip would make the development unviable.

The factors above mean that Dereham has no deliverable employment sites for the Plan period, and is set to lose two employment sites. Therefore the economic element of the Plan is not viable for Dereham.

9.7

In the interest of sustainable growth, employment land should be protected. Landowners will always prefer the larger returns from residential development over commercial. Without a policy to protect existing employment land, the sustainability of the Local Plan could be undermined very quickly.