

## Examination of the Breckland District Local Plan (2011 – 2036)

### Old Buckenham Parish Council Hearing Statement

This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Old Buckenham Parish Council (OBPC) in response to questions 14.73 – 14.76 of the Final Schedule of Matters and Issues for the Examination, which relate to the proposed housing allocations in Old Buckenham.

#### **14.73 Is the Plan positively prepared and justified, insofar, that insufficient allocations are identified in Old Buckenham?**

As set out in our comments on the Pre-Submission Consultation, OBPC considers that the Council's approach to housing allocations is unsound. The application of a blanket 10% uplift in dwelling numbers across all Local Service Centres does not respond to local circumstances, and is unjustified.

Despite several Calls for Sites, and the submission of a significant number of sites around the village by landowners, Breckland Council have been unable to identify sufficient land to accommodate the proposed level of growth. This is because of the specific circumstances of Old Buckenham, where despite there being three schools, two pubs and a shop, the highway network is generally narrow and constrained with a lack of footways or space to provide footways. The village also has a highly sensitive historic core, with a designated Conservation Area and numerous Listed Buildings.

For the Council to rely on a housing strategy which is unable to identify sufficient sites to accommodate its planned growth is unsound.

#### **14.74 If insufficient sites can be identified in Old Buckenham, is relying on the delivery of 17 dwellings through windfall development justified?**

OBPC considers that this approach is not sound. Whilst a small number of windfall sites have come forward within the Parish in recent years, there is nothing to suggest that a further 17 dwellings are likely to be delivered through windfall development during the plan period. Given the historic nature of the village, and the highly constrained highway network, opportunities for windfall development are becoming more and more limited.

#### **14.75 Is the evidence that has ruled out other sites put forward for allocation in Old Buckenham robust?**

OBPC considers that the evidence is robust. Many of the alternative sites were ruled out on the basis of highway safety concerns, and the Parish Council considers highway safety to be of paramount importance. The village is bisected by the B1077, which is extremely busy at peak times, with the schools located on the opposite side to the majority of homes. There is heavy use of the route by HGVs, and the recent opening of Chapel Green School on the edge of the village has seen a further significant increase in traffic. It is therefore essential that any new housing sites do not

contribute further to existing highway safety problems, and that a safe walking route to the village's facilities can be provided.

Other sites have been dismissed on the basis of concerns about the historic environment. Old Buckenham has a very historic core, and the Parish Council feel very strongly that development which has an adverse impact on the historic environment and character of the village should not be allowed.

**14.76 To be effective, should the criteria of Old Buckenham Residential Allocation 1 refer to the need to have regard to heritage assets?**

Yes, in order to comply with national policy, Residential Allocation 1 should require development to have regard to heritage assets.