

North Norfolk District Council Local Plan May 2019

Response from Wells Town Council

The Local Plan contains a Vision for the District area as a whole for residents and visitors as being 'unique and attractive', with a 'thriving and diverse economy', with 'vibrant and appealing towns'... which will act as 'employment and service centres', whose residents will have access to 'a range of local higher skilled and better paid jobs' and 'a good quality of services and facilities close to where they live'. (LP 5.17)

With specific reference to Wells it notes the attractiveness and importance of the town as in an AONB, its dependence on tourism as an employer, its good though modest range of shops, its remote location and demand for second homes resulting in the shortage of affordable housing for local people (LP 4.6)

Education, Health care and Emergency Services

1. **The Council wishes to draw attention to the importance of a good quality of services and facilities for residents of the town, and to the importance of school provision, health care and emergency services and of housing for their providers and asks that they be explicitly included in the considerations of the District Council.**

Sustainable Development

2. **The Council wishes the town to be developed sustainably with a healthy demographic balance for future generations in accordance with government guidelines (NPPF).**
3. **The Council notes the principles that any development should support the vitality and viability of the community and that 'no significant harm should be done to the character or setting of the settlement and the surrounding countryside'. (LP Policy SD2 p. 9-10)**
4. **The Council endorses the encouragement of Community Land Trusts (Homes for Wells) and Neighbourhood Plans. (LP 7.12)**
5. **The Council wishes local plan policies explicitly to include provision for families, for local people as well as the elderly, those unable to live at home and those working in the town. (LP 9.24-30)**

Housing

The Local Plan states its purpose as ensuring that sufficient homes of the right type are built in the right place and at the right times to meet all of the accommodation needs of the town as identified in the most up-to-date evidence. (LP 9.1) It states that affordable homes need to be genuinely affordable to those with lower incomes but recognises that rented accommodation will be the main form of affordable tenure. Given the topography of the town, any building would have to be on the edge of the built area.

6. **The Council accepts the allocation of eighty dwellings for the town as part of its share of government housing requirements for the District over the twenty year period. (LP Policy HOU 1 p.118)**
7. **The Council supports the proposal that a 'significant proportion' of new homes shall be affordable and not be available for second home use (LP 9.5).**
8. **The Council notes proposed infilling of land within the town (itemised below) which will provide some twenty or more dwellings which will be available on the open market and which are intended to be developed within the plan period.¹**
9. **The Council supports the idea of second homes' occupancy restrictions in order to make possible the buying of property by locals. (LP 9.6-8)**
10. **The Council supports the building of affordable housing over the plan period up for the full number remaining as required by the District.**
11. **The Council believes that in considering the matter of affordability the average income in the town should be a consideration.**

¹ Scarborough House (9), Maryland (9), Fielden Cottage (?), 'Harleys' (?), Blackhorse Yard (?), Mill Road (2), Nurseries, Theatre Road (3?)

- 12. The Council is of the view that in order for the town to function effectively as a strong and vibrant community those who need to live reasonably close include not only teachers, medical and care staff and those who man emergency services but also those who provide for the needs of tourists as well as residents' needs.**

Site provision

The Local Plan proposes two development sites, the Market Lane strip (W01/1) and the Mill Road/Holkham Road field (W07/1) having rejected a number of alternatives including a prominent site off Warham Road, another on Stiffkey Road, Church Marsh, Mill Road, and a small site on East Quay.

- 13. The Council wishes to support the development of the Market Lane strip previously identified for an exceptions site development (for local people) and wishes it to be used for that purpose, believing that up to thirty starter homes could be built on the site.**
- 14. The Council wishes to express its concern that the proposed Mill Road development is in a prominent position on the brow of a hill threatens the viability of a small local provider of touring caravan accommodation and equine facilities and does not have good vehicular access.**
- 15. The Council wishes to draw to the attention of the District Council two other sites adjacent to the town boundary, one to the south of Mill Road and the other opposite the Hopkins development to the west of Two Furlong Hill both of lie adjacent to arterial roads.**
- 16. The Council wishes to draw to the attention of the District Council the possible use of an inner northern strip, adjacent to the High School playing fields, of the Warham Road site". (W11).**

Employment

The Local Plan comments on the dominance of tourism as the major employer, the decline of agriculture and manufacturing in the area. (LP 5.6-8)

- 17. The Council wishes to encourage the continued sensitive development of the Harbour as an employer and provider of facilities for fishing, wind farm support and leisure boating.**
- 18. The Council wishes to draw to the attention of the District Council the need to develop existing industrial sites identified on the map (page 265).**
- 19. The Council wishes to express its concern that those applying for key local jobs from outside the town are deterred from doing so because of the price of housing.**

Infrastructure

The Local Plan follows government policy in seeking to restrict the levels of motor vehicle parking in order to promote more sustainable forms of transport and to encourage off-street parking and the provision of electrical charging points for cars. (LP. 7.110) It notes the paucity of public transport and the fact that most visitors arrive and while in Wells travel by car.

- 20. The Council wishes to draw to the attention of the District Council the disappointing lessening of public transport provision in recent years and its effect on the ability of local people to find work out of town and to readily engage in further education, noting also its effect upon the increase of visitor parking of motor vehicles in the town.**
- 21. The Council wishes to draw the attention of the District Council the urgent need to implement the Council's recent proposals in relation to parking restrictions and other traffic management.**