

Debenham Parish Council

Notice Regarding Housing Growth

The Government has made its intentions known regarding future housing growth. It is clear that councils will be expected to ensure the provision of land for housing. Unitary, borough and district councils will be required to produce a Local Plan, which identifies where housing growth will take place.

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils are producing a joint Local Plan, and this will identify sites in our area where development should occur. As part of the planning process, villages like Debenham are being encouraged to develop Neighbourhood Plans, which amongst other things, identify where we as the residents and businesses in the community would wish to see any development located.

A group comprising councillors and volunteers from the village have been working on a Neighbourhood Plan since 2013. 'Work-in-progress' on this draft is available to see on the Parish Council's website.

In the absence of an approved (or 'made') district Local Plan, and to a certain extent, an approved community Neighbourhood Plan, villages such as Debenham, may be open to 'hostile bids' from developers. This means that theoretically, developers will submit planning applications, which even if they are not approved by the planning authority, may stand a good chance of winning on appeal against the local authority's decision.

Debenham has been identified in the emerging joint Local Plan as a core village (formerly a Key Service Centre). This means because the village has a number of important services and facilities, such as schools, doctors surgery, and shops, it is expected that housing growth will be greater than in some of the smaller rural hamlets. The number of houses that Debenham will be expected to accommodate over the next 20 years is yet to be determined, but is likely to be a minimum of 75, and potentially more.

The Parish Council is doing everything it can to protect the interests of its community, and despite some rather unfortunate

rumours circulating recently, is trying to be as open and transparent as possible on some very complex and demanding issues. We will continue to strive to ensure that the community's wishes are at the heart of any decision making undertaken, and the community remains at ease with itself. Whilst the powers of a Parish Council are quite limited, we will do everything we can to represent the village interests, and we will encourage developers to engage with all the village prior to them submitting a planning application.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan is still being worked on, but it is the Council's intention to finalise it over the next month. It will then go out to consultation for everyone to see, and hopefully make comment.

Steve Palframan
Chairman Debenham Parish Council