

# **GREAT BEALINGS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## ***A VILLAGE IN A LANDSCAPE***

### **SUBMISSION OVERVIEW STATEMENT**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this overview is to act as an introduction to the Great Bealings Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) so that the Independent Examiner and other relevant parties can gain a clear picture of the Plan, its contents, objectives, and approach. The overview will also serve to link the three documents which comprise the Plan as submitted: the Plan itself, the Consultation Statement, and the Basic Conditions Statement.

#### **2. Plan Area**

Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) accepted an application from Great Bealings Parish Council (the PC) in late 2012 to set the parish boundary as the Designated Plan Area. The area boundary is shown on the map attached to this overview. For the purposes of the Plan therefore, the parish and the village are the same.

#### **3. Strategy and Objectives of the Plan**

Great Bealings is designated as an ‘Other Village’ under policies SP19 and SP28 of SCDC’s adopted Local Plan. That means that it has no local services and therefore lacks the infrastructure that would support a requirement to set aside land for housing or other development. It is considered to be part of the countryside.

The Plan therefore considers the landscape setting of the village and has written policies designed to protect and enhance the natural environment and context of the village, recognising the built character of the village in relationship to that setting, and adding supportive local detail to the existing Local Plan policies, both adopted and ‘saved’ (as for example in the case of the existing Special Landscape Area which covers much of the village), so as to comply with SCDC’s overarching objectives in a local context.

The natural features of the area are the defining characteristics of the village that residents enjoy and appreciate. This is not an attempt to prevent the evolution of the built environment, or to prevent farmers and others from carrying out permitted development as allowed. In fact the Plan argues that such an approach should assist farmers who might wish to apply for support under agri-environmental schemes. Equally the sustainability of a small rural village is enhanced if the use of the existing housing stock can be adapted over time, subject to appropriate controls, so as to allow home working, bed and breakfast accommodation, etc. It is however intended that the policies in the Plan should channel and control such development so as to protect and enhance the natural setting of the village, its landscape characteristics, and the biodiversity we enjoy. The Plan thus addresses land use in the context of an ‘Other Village’ in ways that both protect what exists today and underwrite the wider objectives of SCDC’s Local Plan.

#### **4. Evidence Gathering**

Evidence was gathered by extensive consultation (see below) and specifically by means of a detailed questionnaire sent to all residents. Their views are directly represented by the approach taken in the Plan. A housing needs survey was carried out by Community Action Suffolk, and Suffolk Wildlife Trust was commissioned to write a Landscape and Wildlife Evaluation report. The working group was fortunate to include an architect who led the creation of a list of Non Designated Heritage Assets, a key element of the approach to the built environment, and advised on the design issues that are referred to in the Plan policies.

#### **5. Consultation**

The full extent of the consultation process is set out in the submitted Consultation Document, as required by the regulations. Key aspects of this process included:

- A village-wide questionnaire which achieved a two-thirds response rate.
- Three public meetings and three Annual Parish Meetings.
- Consultation with SCDC at every stage, including policy and content (Hilary Hanslip), conservation issues (Robert Scrimgeour), and landscape and arboricultural matters (Nicholas Newton).
- Consultation with Suffolk County Council (Alison Wheatland). Support for the Plan approach emerges in SCC's excellent document 'Suffolk Wildlife Strategy' which underwrites the importance of landscape and biodiversity and makes clear that the preservation of Suffolk's richness is a common good which enhances both economic and lifestyle values.
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust, who not only wrote a comprehensive report but also assisted in reviewing the draft Plan to ensure that its objectives were achievable and realistic in planning terms.
- Community Action Suffolk who wrote the housing needs survey.
- DCLG who advised on resourcing and approved the grant which made the creation of the Plan possible.
- Planning Aid, who commented constructively on a number of aspects of the Plan.
- Guidelines set by the Environment Agency were considered to ensure we reflected current flood risk advice in the context of the Lark Valley.
- Suffolk Preservation Society also read and commented on the draft Plan.

#### **6. Basic Conditions**

We have reviewed the regulations regarding the conditions which Neighbourhood Plans are required to meet, and these are set out in the Basic Conditions Document which has been submitted as part of the overall Plan package. We consider that we have met the required conditions, recognising the limited scope of the Plan when compared with what would be required for a major settlement.

#### **7. Designated Plan Area – Map** (see attached)

