

West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils



West Suffolk
working together

Title of Report:	Response to Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan: Pre-submission Version 2017-2031	
Report No:	JGG/JT/17/004	
Report to and dates:	West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group	9 October 2017
	SEBC Cabinet	17 October 2017
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Purpose of report:	To provide a response on behalf of West Suffolk to the Pre-submission version of the Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031.	
Recommendation:	That the West Suffolk Joint Growth Steering Group recommends to the SEBC Cabinet, to endorse the comments within Report No: JGG/JT/17/004, which will form the basis of a formal response to the Pre-submission Version of the Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031.	
Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:	• N/A	
Alternative option(s):	• N/A	
Implications:		
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders. St Edmundsbury Borough Council is required to fulfil certain statutory requirements and provide advice to the Parish Council	Low	A Service Level Agreement exists between Hargrave Parish Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council that sets out expectations.	Low
Public opposition	Medium	Policy documents have the potential to be highly contentious. The Parish Council has consulted and made every effort to build cross-community consensus, there is a small risk of public opposition.	Low
Ward(s) affected:		Wickhambrook Ward	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix A - Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2031 – Pre-submission version

1.1.1 Hargrave Parish Council has published a pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan. They have notified St Edmundsbury Borough Council and have asked for feedback on the draft Plan. The Council are required to consider whether the Pre-submission Plan meets the requirements of the Localism Act. This includes:

a) whether the plan meets the basic conditions:

- (a) *having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order (or neighbourhood plan),*
- (b) *having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order, (Orders only)*
- (c) *having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order, (Orders only)*
- (d) *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,*
- (e) *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area),*
- (f) *the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations, and*
- (g) *prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Order (or plan) and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order.*

In terms of the basic conditions, the Plan is considered:

- to be compliant with national policies and advice. This includes the NPPF, and the Strategic development needs and strategic policies set out within the Local Plan.
- to contribute towards sustainable development as it aims to lead to improvements in environmental, economic and social conditions.
- to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan. The neighbourhood plan supports the general principles that the strategic policies are concerned with. There is not a conflict between the Plans and no neighbourhood plan policy undermines a strategic policy.

- to be compatible with EU obligations this includes Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessments, Directive 2011/92/EU on Environmental Impact Assessments, Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of fauna and flora (habitats) and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (species).
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

b) the suitability of the Consultation Statement

The Hargrave Parish Council website does not provide a Consultation Statement as a formal document, but has stated that the document is open for public comments for 6 weeks. It explains where people can express their views and how to attain a hard copy. The Parish Council have sent a link to the copy of the Plan to the Local Planning Authority. This is all that is required under the Regulations. A formal Consultation Statement will be necessary when the Neighbourhood Plan is formally submitted to the Council at Regulation 15 stage. An amendment to the Service Level Agreement wording is suggested to reflect this.

c) whether the other documents submitted are suitable

The Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a Landscape Character Appraisal and Important Views. The Landscape Character Appraisal comprises 5 maps around the village area, with key features identified. These maps are also embedded within the Neighbourhood Plan and are considered appropriate. The Important Views document identifies 19 views on a map accompanied by photographs that justify the importance of the views. The documents are fit for purpose and support the Plan.

d) whether any maps submitted conform with OS mapping requirements

The submitted maps appear appropriate and have appropriate copyright through GetMapping, Parish Online services.

1.1.2 Overall, the Pre-submission Plan is considered to meet the requirements of the Localism Act and the Service Level Agreement between St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Hargrave Parish Council. Members are requested to note these findings.

2. Comments on the Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan's Consultation poses a series of questions and this report sets out these questions and proposed responses for Members' consideration.

2.2 *Vision and objectives. Do you agree with the Vision and Objectives*

(Section 5)?

The Plan proposes a Vision “to protect and enhance the distinctive character and assets of the Village for the community both young and old.” The Vision is supported by four topic areas underpinned by objectives that contribute to the delivery of the Vision. These are aspirations that are broadly in alignment with the adopted development plan. The Vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are supported.

2.3 ***Hargrave’s Spatial Strategy. Do you agree with Policy HAR1 (Section 6.5?)***

The approach to the Hargrave Spatial strategy is proportionate and is supported. The Strategy seeks limited growth within the main built-up area having regard to environmental constraints.

2.4 ***Hargrave Housing Settlement Boundary. Do you agree with Policy HAR2 (Section 7.5)?***

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to largely reinstate the settlement boundary removed in 2010 by the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy. The proposed settlement boundary only differs from the former 2006 Core Strategy settlement boundary for Hargrave by the inclusion of the full extent of 3 back gardens r/o Smart Fox, Willow Cottage and Willow House. Hargrave’s Neighbourhood Plan proposes an approach to development within the settlement boundary accords that with the principles within the adopted St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 for Infill Villages. The introduction of the settlement boundary will not designate Hargrave as an Infill Village for the purposes of the Core Strategy however, as Hargrave does not have sufficient services. The settlement boundary will allow the potential for greater growth within the defined area than would have previously been permitted as the village without a settlement boundary, is currently designated as countryside within the Core Strategy.

The main material difference between a countryside designation and an Infill village is that as an Infill village Hargrave would be capable of development of up to 5 units, whereas Policy DM27 for a countryside designation would only permit up to 2 dwellings. Notwithstanding this policy distinction, the proposed settlement boundary for Hargrave is tightly drawn. There are not any obvious gaps in the build-form within the settlement boundary where a scheme could readily be developed without demolition or reconfiguration. Hargrave’s aim for reintroducing the settlement boundary, to allow appropriate limited growth subject to compliance with other policies within the development plan accords with principles of sustainable development and is supported. The other change the Neighbourhood Plan highlights is that a settlement boundary will enable an opportunity for the provision of affordable housing under Policy DM29 Rural Housing Exception sites. This may permit a development to meet/ assist a need in meeting affordable housing in the locality that would not otherwise be met, subject to addressing all other relevant criteria. This is also supported.

2.5 ***Housing Mix. Do you agree with Policy HAR3 (Section 7.8)?***

The Policy states that proposals for three or more dwellings located within the Housing Settlement Boundary will be permitted where they incorporate one or two bedroom homes. This Policy is considered appropriate given the housing need identified by the Plan.

2.6 ***Communications Technology. Do you agree with Policy HAR4 (Section 9.4)?***

The Policy is in two parts. The first element seeks to minimise the number of masts required for the efficient operation of the network. This is considered to duplicate the requirements of paragraph 45 of the NPPF, which seeks for applicants to evidence that they have explored erecting antennas on an existing mast before applying for new equipment. It is considered that there is no need for this part of the policy, which is effectively replication of national policy. The second part, which requires proposals to minimise the impacts on the rural character of Hargrave having regard to the identified important views within the Neighbourhood Plan is locally specific and is considered sound.

2.7 ***Protecting and Maintaining Features of Landscape and Biodiversity Value. Do you agree with Policy HAR5 (Section 9.4)?***

The Policy's aims to preserve and enhance features of biodiversity and landscape value are supported.

2.8 ***Protecting the Landscape Setting of Hargrave. Do you agree with Policy HAR6 (Section 9.7)?***

The Policy seeks to protect the Landscape setting of Hargrave and is in principle supported. This Policy references Policy DM27 of the St Edmundsbury Local Plan. This should in fact read Policy DM27 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015.

2.9 ***Local Green Spaces. Do you agree with Policy HAR7 (Section 9.10)?***

The Policy seeks to only permit development on identified local green spaces in exceptional circumstances. This Policy is considered appropriate.

2.10 ***Village Playing Field. Do you agree with Policy HAR8 (Section 9.11)?***

The Policy aims to protect the village playing field from development that detracts from its use as a recreation facility. Proposals which reduce the quality or size of the Playing field will only be permitted if a replacement of equivalent to better standard is provided in an equally accessible location. This policy appears to be a duplication of Joint Development Management Policies Document Policy DM42 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities and is therefore not considered necessary.

2.11 ***Local Heritage Assets. Do you agree with Policy HAR9 (Section 10.5)?***

The Policy seeks to retain and protect local heritage assets. Proposals that may harm such assets should be supported by detailed analysis of the asset that demonstrates the wider public benefit of the proposal. The majority of the policy is duplication of Joint Development Management Policies Document Policy DM16, and is therefore not necessary. Nevertheless, the Policy does seek to specify exactly which properties are Local Heritage Assets. It should be noted that the text only mentions Old School House and School Hall. The Proposals Maps also highlight the Knowles Green Farm and Knowles Green Cottage, which should be incorporated. It is suggested that the Policy simply identifies the local heritage assets and refers to JDMPD Policy DM16.

2.12 ***Village Character. Do you agree with Policy HAR10 (Section 10.19)?***
The design characteristics highlighted are generally acceptable, and in accordance with Joint Development Management Policies Document Policies DM2 and DM22. However, it is suggested that the guidance on building materials is overly prescriptive and may stifle innovative design. It is recommended that paragraph 10.17 on building materials is altered to reflect this comment.

2.13 ***Community Actions comments***
The Neighbourhood Plan incorporates 14 Community Actions in addition to the planning policies outlined above. The 14 actions and 10 policies are considered to have a direct relationship to the Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan Vision and objectives: "To protect and enhance the distinctive character and assets of the Village for the community both young and old". The Community Actions identify aspirations of the community, which require actions but are not suitable to be incorporated as a planning policies. The only comment in relation to the Community Actions are that Community Action 1 states that ...small scale employment opportunities...will not have an impact on residents and the environment. All development to some extent impacts on its surroundings. The insertion of "adverse" before the word impact is suggested.

3. **Summary Questions**
Generally in favour of the Plan – Yes
I would like to see changes to the Plan – Yes

The Plan is in principle supported. Members are recommended to endorse the above comments, which will form the basis of a formal response to the Pre-submission version of the Hargrave Neighbourhood Plan. This report will then be referred to Cabinet for approval.