

Brandeston PC Working Group (WG) Meeting – Artisan North Scheme

Minutes of the meeting held at Brandeston Village Hall

On

Wednesday 19th January at 7 pm

Present: David Fletcher, Paul Baker, Scott Bange, Brendan Baker & Rachel Summers
(nominated as Chair)

1. **Aim of the WG** – to determine if there is a real ‘need’, and if so the potential positives and negatives of the Artisan North Scheme/similar scheme in this location (or on an alternative site).

WG to report back to the full PC with a view to agree how best to respond to Artisan North.

Artisan North Scheme – the scheme/similar scheme would have to meet the key criteria of an ‘Exception Site’ as defined by SCLP5.11.

Rural exception sites are sites for affordable housing development in rural locations where market housing would not normally be acceptable because of planning policy constraints and are therefore an exception to policy.

Policy 5.11 Affordable Housing on Exception Sites – Proposals for the development of affordable housing in the countryside will be permitted where:

- *It is demonstrated there is an Identified local need for affordable housing and this cannot be met through existing housing allocations in the Local Plan or relevant Neighbourhood Plan, or through development within the Settlement Boundary;*
- *Scheme is adjacent or well related to an identified Settlement Boundary or a cluster of houses in the countryside (as defined by SCLP5.4);*
- *Scheme includes a variety of house types/tenure according to identified need. Including need for older people;*
- *Scheme location, scale and design standard will retain or enhance the character and setting of the settlement or cluster and not lead to settlement coalescence.*

In addition to these criteria the policy notes that:

- *a limited amount of market housing will be permitted to cross-subsidise the affordable housing to make it viable*
- *the amount of market housing on the site should be no more than one third of the dwellings on the site*
- *Where Starter Homes are proposed, these should form a mix of tenures on the site*
- *Where sites for affordable housing in the countryside are brought forward with an element of market housing, both housing tenures should be built to the same design standards and contribute towards the character of the area*

At the national level, Government planning policy within the National Planning Policy Framework, as updated in July 2021 affirmed support for the provision of Rural Housing in paragraph 72 for ‘Entry Level Exception Sites’ and in paragraph 78 for general needs, rural exception sites.

2. **Brandeston Village** – is designated by ESC in the Local Plan Hierarchy as a Small Village, facilities include:
- Church
 - Pub
 - Village hall
 - Bus routes to Ipswich - 4 per day, the earliest 11.20am
Plus 1 route 08.05am operating only on Saturdays & school holidays
Plus, a school term bus 08.05am
No buses providing a service to local primary schools
No direct buses to Woodbridge etc.
 - Two designated 'Quiet Lanes'
 - No other services most notably no provision of – primary school, surgery, post office, bank/cash point & shops
 - No street lighting
 - Limited pavements
3. **Establish 'need'** – to take into consideration results of the Brandeston HNS:
- Current requirement as of Autumn 2021
1 x adapted 2 bed bungalow – able to purchase on the open market, or shared ownership = *would this be a need which meets the affordable criteria? Consider cost of adapting current owner-occupied dwelling v build of adapted home.*
1 x 2 bed flat or appartement – able to purchase on the open market, or shared ownership or rental = *would this be a need which meets the affordable criteria?*
 - Requirement in 1-2 years
1 x Low-cost freehold bungalow, downsize from 4 to 3 bed = *would this be a need which meets the affordable criteria? Demand to be met by open market?*
1 x Cheaper home, open market purchase = *would this be a need which meets the affordable criteria?*
 - Requirement in 3 years
1 x smaller property to downsize to, other type of finance equity = *Demand to be met on open market.*
 - Requirement in 5 years
1 x Smaller 3 bed open market house? = *Demand to be met on open market.*
 - Summary of Requirement up to 5 years
6 x Homes open market purchase = *Demand to be met on open market.*
 - Requirement in 10 years
1 x affordable home = *Not considered as too remote.*

The WG agreed that the scheme proposed does not meet the requirements identified by the Brandeston HNS. The requirements identified by the Brandeston HNS are in the main 'demand' for open market value houses rather than 'need', and demand for open

market bungalows for older people, and in addition to this no requirement has been identified in Brandeston for smaller affordable/starter homes for younger people. In addition to this, those that have responded declaring a 'need' are unlikely to meet the criteria for affordable homes as they are current owner-occupiers with a desire to downsize the number of bedrooms / move to a bungalow.

The WG concluded that the Brandeston is a small Suffolk village, with limited scope for development, which increases its desirability as a location (assuming one does not need to rely on the provision of public transport, general connectivity and the close proximity of general facilities and services). Thus, the type of housing requirements arising from the survey can be classed as housing 'demand' which can only be met on the open market. As there is a limited availability of current housing stock, the average price of property in the village of Brandeston is higher than that in the surrounding villages. And generally, the housing stock is older and has, over time been extended in size by former and current owners, and the social housing sold off via the 'right to buy scheme'. (In the past there has been provision of smaller 2 bed homes and social housing in Brandeston.)

The WG concluded that possible current 'need' identified in the Brandeston HNS could readily be provided for / met by provision in the existing Local Plan in adjacent villages and towns (with connectivity and ready access to services and facilities), both in terms of current development and with the land coming forward for development. ESC Local Plan has designated areas for residential development, namely the site in the neighbouring village of Kettleburgh; subject to an application currently in the planning process for 16 new dwellings plus 5 affordable homes.

In addition to this, the requirement for an adapted property could be registered with ESC and specific provision made for the parishioner in the neighbouring village of Kettleburgh. (The two bungalows opposite Thomas Mills School were built for specific parishioners of Framlingham and their families.)

It is of interest to note that none of the housing requirements arising from the Brandeston or Artisan HNS are registered on the Gateway to Homechoice.

N.B. The shared ownership homes in Cretingham did not sell, these homes are now all social rented housing. The affordable housing designated on the Leas development site were ported to Ufford.

The WG agreed that the Artisan HNS results in part overlapped with the results of the Brandeston HNS, but not sufficiently enough to establish a 'need' or to meet the criteria of SCLP5.11. There was general agreement that the Artisan HNS results as presented, were skewed in favour of the Artisan North Scheme.

Although there is no set definition of housing 'need' and 'demand' they can broadly be described as follows:

Housing 'demand' is a market driven concept and relates to the type and number of houses that households will choose to occupy based on preference and ability to pay.

Housing 'need' is an indicator of existing deficit: the number of households that do not have access to accommodation that meets certain normative standards. This measure mainly refers to the level of need for more or improved social housing.

Housing 'requirement' is a term sometimes used to combine these two measures to generate an overall picture of the housing market.

- **Need** is where there is a shortfall of adequate accommodation.
- **Demand** is about where a person wants to stay depending on area and ability to pay.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/affordable-housing-supply>

Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. It can be a new-build property or a private sector property that has been purchased for use as an affordable home.

Eligibility is determined by local incomes and local house prices.

Housing Types:

Shared Ownership

Shared Ownership is a type of affordable home ownership when a purchaser takes out a mortgage on a share of a property and pays rent to a landlord on the remaining share. For example, someone might buy a 50% share in a property, and pay rent to the landlord on the remaining 50%.

First Homes & Eligibility 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes>

First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:

- a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value
- b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria (see below);
- c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).

First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.

4. **Alternative Sites** – The WG examined the Brandeston Village Plan, noting the conservation area boundary, the important views, important open/green/tree spaces and special landscape areas.

As the WG had already established that there is no identified local need for affordable housing, only brief discussions were had about other sites, the WG concluded that whilst there are other areas of land abutting the settlement area, as with the current site in question, development of these site locations would not retain or enhance the character and setting of the settlement.

5. **Significant Long-Term Merit** – As the WG established that there is no identified local need for affordable housing, detailed discussions to consider the possible significant merit offered in terms of the land to be gifted to the Parish did not proceed.

6. **Conclusion** –

- WG to propose that the PC should not engage further with Artisan North as there is insufficient identified local need for affordable housing which cannot be met through existing housing allocations in the Local Plan.

- Ask the Parish Clerk how to register the results of the Brandeston HNS with ESC.

On 28.01.2022 the Parish Clerk spoke to Stephanie Baxter, ESC the person with responsibility for affordable housing. The Clerk enquired as to how to log the results of the Brandeston PC HNS with ESC, so that they can be referred to in the future when considering planning applications. The Clerk was informed that ESC does not keep the results on record, that in the future to attach the report from the HNS as a supplementary PDF document when responding to any application. Stephanie Baxter specialises in housing needs and guides the planners in decision making. In her opinion, as Brandeston has no public transport access to local primary schools and very limited provision of public transport services, her advice to ESC planners when considering applications for affordable housing in Brandeston, would be to refuse an application as the village does not have the connectivity and services to support a family requiring affordable housing.