

Examination of the Derbyshire Dales Draft Local Plan

Session 14 Thursday 18 May

Matters 10-11

Allocations and Settlement Boundaries

Rural Parishes

Statement from Brailsford & Ednaston Parish Council

Pat Laughlin, Chairman

The session today is focused on RURAL PARISHES.

I am representing Brailsford & Ednaston Parish Council – therefore considered to be a **Rural Parish**.

A Parish Council exists to represent its residents. On the basis of representations made by these residents, a core value adopted by the Parish Council is the maintenance of a SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY and its expected QUALITY OF LIFE – thus the maintenance of a rural village in a rural setting.

Sustainable Communities are maintained by SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – recognised to be the balance of economic activity, the protection and enhancement of the environment and the existence of a robust social infrastructure.

In this draft Plan Brailsford village has been identified by the District Council as a Tier 3 Settlement in its Settlement Hierarchy, which forms the basis of the housing allocation. A Tier 3 settlement is described as an ‘Accessible Settlements with Limited Facilities’. Brailsford is one of 12 such settlements, with these villages considered the most sustainable villages in the rural areas with generally good local social infrastructure, some local employment opportunities and good accessibility to towns and larger centres.

As a Parish Council we have raised a challenge to this designation and you heard from our professional representative last week.

We ask specifically ‘When is a VILLAGE no longer a VILLAGE’ because of the large number of new homes developed in a very short space of time and would like to bring the following to your attention the following.

1. The original Settlement Hierarchy assessment was based on a village population **TWICE** that resident at the time – in fact the total number recorded in the ONS Parish boundary was used. This gave an entirely FALSE impression of the size of the current village – at the time the existing population exceeded the threshold of 400 by c 64 residents rather than the 460 suggested. This error has been acknowledged by the District Council.
2. Despite references to the SOCG, since 2014 and until March 2017 approvals have been granted for **151** new homes, with a further **32** recommended for approval, an additional 20

(on a brownfield site) awaiting approval, and 43 in the appeal process. If all proceed, making a total of 245 – this is almost the same no as existed in the village at the start of 2014 or approximately a 100% increase. I would point out that the document tabled by the District Council on 9 May does not accurately reflect these nos..

3. Using only the draft Local Plan allocations, Brailsford has been allocated 23% of the total Tier 3 requirement (the 2nd highest), and a higher per capita allocation, despite being smaller than some other designations.
4. With the exception of the 13 home development, all proposals lie to the north and west of the village in large estate formations, thus extending it into green fields, away from the natural centre and the existing amenity, and altering the shape and integrity of the village and its community.
5. While the first 50 homes were promoted and approved by local politicians to fund a new primary school, since that date, no structured consideration has been given to ensuring investment in essential local infrastructural improvement for the village whether in amenity, environmental and road safety facilities, or social infrastructure. It was only as a result of an intervention from the Parish Council that additional funding for the GP surgery was considered.
6. The nature of the area and its lack of transport facility is clearly demonstrated by an ONS (census) statistic which shows that 40% of households in the Parish have 2 or more cars compared with 30% in Derbyshire Dales as a whole, and 29% in England. Therefore, development here does not meet the sustainable travel criteria set.
7. Road safety issues arising from increases in local traffic in an area and identified in independent research commissioned by the Parish Council (which include the identification of an abnormally high level of HGV movements) have been totally ignored to date.
8. The Local Plan statement relating to the availability of secondary education must be wrong. Two large S106 contributions have been agreed from the Brailsford allocations to fund new school places in Ashbourne.

More specifically:

Accessibility

We accept that our village has some limited amenity and service facility but these services are under continued pressure and have little capacity for expansion on site and within the existing village. They lie to the south of the village and can only be accessed from the main residential areas of the village (to the north) by crossing the busy A52.

Employment

There are now relatively NO local employment opportunities. The Hierarchy study concluded that Brailsford had a '*relatively weak economy score*'.

Areas of the village which could have provided local employment have been taken over by service or specialist businesses – the latter catering for passing trade or specialist buyers. These are also micro-businesses offering very limited employment and those working there are often travelling in. A previous employment site has remained derelict for a number of years and has now been offered for more housing. With the exception of home working not suitable for or available to all, Brailsford is a commuter or dormer village with everyone travelling to work.

While there is a bus service, a survey conducted by the Parish Council in 2016 showed that this is considered by current residents to be inflexible and unsuitable to meet their travel to work needs which are to destinations largely away from the town centres it services. Therefore, inevitably, more development will lead to more individual private car journeys. Policy S2 of the draft Plan states that development should “*Minimise the need to travel by promoting development in locations where there is access to a broad range of jobs, services and facilities which are accessible by foot*”

Social Infrastructure

Brailsford currently has only ONE small area of public open space – designated as a children’s play area. This is managed by the Parish Council but leased from the County Council on a short term lease. The adjacent playing field, also owned by the County Council, is used on a grace and favour basis but has no proper facility or management plan. There are no public sports facilities – football pitch, tennis courts, bowling green etc.

The Village Institute, which is owned by the Parish Council, is a 1922 building, containing asbestos, with limited facility and badly in need of refurbishment. In its current configuration, it is unsuitable for the range of indoor leisure facilities which the village has identified would add value to the social infrastructure especially for young children and teenagers.

Affordable Homes

The current applications approved by the District Council, which align with the draft Local Plan, provide for limited affordable homes – the question raised by residents is what is affordable in this locality – the majority of the homes planned and 3,4 or 5 bedroom, with some prices in the region of £0.5m – well above the reach of the average wage. Large S106 contributions are made for development elsewhere in the District.

Based on the demographic of the village a demand for specially adapted bungalows, which could be available to older residents wishing to downsize, has been identified. Despite a public commitment given when a small development of bungalows (6) was refused, that this need would be considered an essential part of all future applications, only 2 new bungalows are currently identified.

In Summary

We accept that there has to be some growth and development in the village and the Parish and have stated this in our draft Neighbourhood Plan. We simply wish to see that:

- Any allocations are based on sound and accurate evidence and fact – is the Settlement Hierarchy based on fact.
- That growth in the village is organic and continuous and NOT exponential. Doubling its size in a relatively short space of time does not meet this criterion.
- The housing provided meets local needs – there is a requirement for bungalows

- That clear consideration and recognition is given to the definition of a VILLAGE community and the maintenance of the traditions, standards and quality of life of a VILLAGE environment in a rural setting. This includes maintaining the integrity of the conservation area and its surrounding environment to the south of the A52.
- That the importance of maintaining Sustainable Communities is recognised for ongoing social cohesion and the reduction of likely unnecessary burdens on public services which can result from creating dormer centres with limited employment opportunity and a lack of essential environmental and social infrastructure.
- That the appropriate level of **local** investment is required in relation to environmental and social infrastructure, especially traffic management and road safety.
- That as the recent Housing White Paper stated, suitable weight is given to local needs and requirements – Brailsford needs bungalows - and that the right homes are developed in the right places to provide sustainable development.