



Castle Heddingham Parish Council and Burial Board

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To:
Braintree District Council
Sustainable Development
Causeway House
Braintree
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CM7 9HB

11 April 2016

Dear Sirs

BRAINTREE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN: CASTLE HEDINGHAM

Castle Heddingham Parish Council conducted a survey of all parishioners to gain their views on the Local Plan submissions for the parish, and around 30% of the electorate responded. In fact responses are still being received but anything that arrived following the deadline for consideration at the Parish Council meeting has been excluded from this report. The decision of the Parish Council at our March meeting was to support the survey findings and to submit them to Braintree District Council as the Parish Council response to the consultation on the Local Plan.

Please read the Parish Council response in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- Appendix A: Survey questionnaire distributed to all households in the parish
- Appendix B: Chart of overall survey question responses – just under 300 individual respondents
- Appendix C: Summary of comments submitted in response to each question
- Appendix D: Key policy statements from the National Planning Policy Framework relevant to Castle Heddingham

In summary, the Parish Council does not support development on any of the sites submitted to the Local Plan for the following reasons:

The Parish Council does not support proposals for development outside the village envelope, as already recommended in our Village Design Statement (2008). There is no public support for a change or expansion of this envelope in our rural community of Castle Heddingham and all such development would adversely impact on the existing landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity of the village. Castle Heddingham is a mediaeval planned village with international historical and heritage significance and this should not be compromised through piecemeal development outside its current village envelope. (CASH 167, 168, 169, 170, 505)

The site within the village envelope (CASH 553) is a community open space, children's' play park, recreation field and historically significant piece of land. It is the location of St James' Well, the site of

a mediaeval hospital and the Chapel of St James. It is one of only two open spaces left in the village and is designated as a “visually important open space” (Village Design Statement 2008).

Our survey of parishioners comprehensively supported maintaining the village envelope (75% agreed or strongly agreed) and opposed expanding the envelope to make more land available for housing (78% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

To address each site more specifically: (in brackets is the survey % disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the submission of each site)

CASH 167: Outside the village envelope; previous application rejected on appeal to the Planning Inspector; abuts flood plain; development would constitute backfield development; access difficulties (64% disagreed/strongly disagreed)

CASH 168: In open countryside; well outside the village envelope; dangerous access; would create a precedent for linear development and would have a high impact on the landscape sensitivity of the area, particularly the views to the castle (59% disagreed/strongly disagreed)

CASH 169: Outside the village envelope; backfield development, adjoining flood plain; difficult access; previous applications have been rejected (75% disagreed/strongly disagreed)

CASH 170: Outside village envelope; access will compound existing traffic problems to neighbouring school site; development on agricultural land (59% disagreed/strongly disagreed)

CASH 505: Outside village envelope; not suitable within flood zone and flood plain; current use as tourist attraction and provider of local employment; area for wildlife conservation; would be an extension of ribbon development merging the villages of Castle Hedingham and Great Yeldham; important to safeguard the separation of the two rural communities; impact on existing landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity (71% disagreed/strongly disagreed)

CASH 553: community open space; children’s’ play park & recreation field; historically significant piece of land. It is the location of St James’ Well, the site of a mediaeval hospital and the Chapel of St James. One of only two open spaces left in the village; designated as a “visually important open space” (Village Design Statement 2008) (75% disagreed/strongly disagreed)

Castle Hedingham is “of considerable archaeological and historical importance, as an example of a small medieval and post-medieval market town” (English Heritage Historic Towns Assessment, 1999) and is heavily reliant on this feature to support the local economy. The Parish Council accepts the need for more homes across the district, in particular affordable housing to enable people to remain in their local community. Castle Hedingham has already experienced significant expansion within the village envelope during the 20th century and has not been averse to new development in more recent years on brownfield sites. The village is also affected by the recent building of 200 new homes on the parish boundary with Sible Hedingham. However our village is poorly served by public transport, struggling with parking and traffic problems and offers little opportunity for employment locally. The existing infrastructure is insufficient to support any significant amount of further development.

Yours sincerely

Claire Waters
Parish Clerk