

SIBLE HEDINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL – APPENDIX ONE TO MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD 25TH JUNE 2012

Good evening, the Parish Council felt that it may be helpful to clarify our understanding of the current status of the Premdor/Rockways Masterplan and Sible Hedingham's role in Braintree District Council's Local Development Framework.

Although they have been extremely helpful in facilitating this consultation, we should be clear that this is not a planning application by the developers, Bloor Homes. It is a Supplementary Planning Document, proposed by BDC as the Masterplan for Premdor/Rockways Regeneration Site. If adopted, it will define any future development and use of the site, regardless of developer.

Sible Hedingham is currently described in BDC's Site Allocations document as a Key Service Village, defined as having 'a good level of services, including primary schools, primary health care facilities, convenience shopping facilities, local employment, frequent public transport to higher order settlements and easy access by public transport to secondary schools.' For this reason, its Regeneration Site has been chosen as a 'growth location'.

BDC's Core Strategy says that Regeneration sites in Key Service Villages will be developed into 'mixed use growth locations' and that they will be in accordance with Master Plans. It also says that 'the uses will include community facilities, open space and infrastructure requirements'. We do not believe this plan meets the requirements set out in the Core Strategy but, once adopted, it will be used to determine all future planning applications from any developers (Bloor Homes or anyone else).

The Parish Council feels it is regrettable that neither the community nor the Parish Council was consulted in the Development of the Evidence Base or the preparation of this draft Supplementary Planning Document. This is contrary, we believe, to BDC's Statement of Community Involvement and statutory regulations.

Please note, however, that the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, which defines Sible Hedingham as a Key Service Village has

still to go out to public consultation (probably Sep/Oct 2012) and that this Master plan itself will be considered at a meeting of BDC's LDF panel on 25th July.

The public are entitled to attend and speak at that meeting if they contact BDC beforehand.

The Masterplan itself identifies that approximately half the Premdor/Rockways site is unsuitable for development, being in the flood plain. This area is therefore to be left as the existing wildlife reserve and open public space with access paths. Of the remainder, about 87% is allocated to housing. There is a small area earmarked for a 'workhub' which is some small serviced offices and meeting rooms. The developers acknowledge that these are more likely to facilitate existing small business than to generate employment in their own right. The space around the workhub was originally intended as a site for a medical centre but as Mid-Essex PCT has said this is no longer required, small workshop units have been proposed in its place.

The response from residents so far, both in face-to-face conversations and via surveys, has been predominantly negative. There is disappointment that the perceived needs of the village have not been addressed particularly in the areas of employment, roads and parking, public transport, medical services, education and recreational facilities.

The Masterplan lacks any reference as to whether, how and when these shortcomings in infrastructure will be addressed. Indeed many of the promises contained in previous iterations of the plan have now been withdrawn.

The Parish Council believes that it is very important that the residents of Sible Hedingham have the opportunity to create their own vision for regeneration. The argument that 'anything is better than leaving the site as it is' is misleading. At the moment, however ugly and dangerous it may be, it has the potential for genuine regeneration - to bring growth and prosperity to the area. Once it is allocated in this planning document as predominantly a housing estate, no other kind of development will be considered or permitted.