

**'World of Planning' Responses to the Development
Management Policies – Preferred Options**

Beccles and Wangford
1st and 15th October 2009



Waveney District Council
Serving the Community

Attendees

Beccles		1 October 2009		Wangford		15 October 2009	
I. Hinton	Barnby Parish Council			P. Scriven		Frostenden, Uggeshall and South Cove Parish Council	
M. Lincoln	Barnby Parish Council			G. Stockwell		Frostenden, Uggeshall and South Cove Parish Council	
G.C. Meen	Barsham and Shipmeadow Parish Council			B. Burden		Kessingland Parish Council	
A.P. Thwaites	Beccles Town Council			B. Sinfield		Kessingland Parish Council	
R. Ullmer	Mutford Parish Council			L. Martin		Kessingland Parish Council	
C. Mehew	Ringsfield and Weston Parish Council			J. Pryer		North Cove Parish Council	
R. Gardner	Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Parish Council			C. Gosling		Oulton Parish Council	
A. Hadingham	St. James South Elmham Parish Meeting			J. Grist		Oulton Parish Council	
Cllr K. Sale	Waveney District Council			T. Goldson		Suffolk County Council	
G. Rogers	Worlingham Parish Council			M. Ryland		Wangford Parish Council	
				P. Hayes		Wangford Parish Council	
				R. Miller		Wangford Parish Council	
				S. Farrands		Wangford Parish Council	
				Cllr S. Allen		Waveney District Council	
				M. Rogers		Westhall Parish Council	

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1. Introduction

Two World of Planning events were held for members of Parish and Town Councils to express their views on two policies being put forward in the Development Management Policies consultation. These were held in Beccles Thursday 1st October 2009 and in Wangford on Thursday 15th October 2009.

The policies discussed were:

- DM03 - Low Carbon and Renewable Energy; and
- DM26 - Re-use of vacant School Buildings and Playing Fields.

2. Policy DM03 - Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

Do you agree that low carbon and renewable energy is an important part of the solution for addressing climate change ?

General agreement that renewable energy is needed.

The importance of considering the range of technologies and energy sources available to the District and their associated 'pros and cons' was expressed.

There was support for energy efficiency and the need to reduce energy consumption in new and existing housing stock. New builds should be of good design and scale to reduce community energy demands. It was also stated the community needs to consider the wider implications of climate change and not just the impacts directly related to Waveney District.

There was an understanding that information regarding renewable energy (such as technological advances and government policies) were continually changing. It was thought the general public needed further education to address this.

Concerns were raised over the difficulty of navigating through the large amounts of information available and the complexity of the facts and figures being floated in the public domain. To increase the knowledge and understanding local residents have regarding issues surrounding climate change and renewable energy the Council needs to improve its communication with local communities. This could be done through better explanation of government targets and how the Council intends to meet these targets as set out in local policy. This includes the need for the Council to disseminate more information to the local parishes in order to increase the sense of transparency.

Several attendees expressed concerns over national policy which appears to represent government interests and ignore the interests of local communities. There was a feeling that the Government is holding districts, such as Waveney, to ransom.

The high levels of government control has led to a lack of ownership of the climate change issue and energy provision. Possibly as a result, some attendees expressed a concern that many members of the public were apathetic to the problem of climate change and the potential impacts in the future.

It was felt the main focus on energy generation revolved around wind turbines. Not enough consideration being given to other potential technologies to supply renewable energy. There was concern the information received by local communities is often unbalanced leading to confusion as to what is being done, or could be done, to address the impacts of climate change. When considering this, the Parish Councils stated the need to have a point of contact in the District Council who is able to provide objective information.

Concerns were raised regarding the installation of wind turbines in the District, although some support was also shown in the context of climate change and energy security. Issues included:

- impacts on the landscape (including the protection of the AONB and SSSIs);
- flicker;
- noise;

- energy efficiency (including the CO₂ produced during production and transportation); and
- foreign ownership of energy sources and supply networks in the UK.

It was thought that once a few wind turbines were installed this would lead to a general feeling of acceptance among residents which in turn may lead to an increasing number of wind turbines being installed across the District. There was concern as to what happens to the installations once they surpass their working life. Comments were made about benefits of alternative wind turbines with vertical blades which are not so visually unattractive.

It was expressed that other technologies need to be considered including waste incineration (which would require better waste management), biomass and tidal/wave generated power. Waste incineration was also seen as having potential to create additional employment.

The Government could further support local communities with renewable energy technology installation by promoting community schemes which could be owned and operated by local communities. This should be through national funding and support. The local community in turn would receive the financial and moral benefits of such enterprises.

Locally, where are appropriate locations for both small-scale and large-scale renewable energy installations ?

Installation of renewable and low-carbon technologies is supported if locations are appropriate.

Energy generation from incineration and wind turbines are most suitable for areas of dense road networks and industrial areas.

It was generally thought offshore wind turbines were most appropriate for Waveney District. The District is flat therefore onshore turbines are widely visible and intrusive for local residents and the landscape. The energy efficiency and energy output of wind turbines is not high enough to outweigh the landscape impacts and hence, does not make them appropriate for onshore installation in Waveney District.

What personal actions can be taken to mitigate climate change ?

It was accepted that personal actions can contribute to the mitigation of climate change.

Community schemes that are owned and operated by local communities can provide benefits for individuals and communities.

Energy generation can be supplemented by implementing measures to reduce energy consumption in the home such as loft and cavity insulation and the sealing of air gaps to reduce the energy needed for space heating.

It was mentioned that on-site renewable energy technologies such as photovoltaic panels and solar water could be installed. Roof tiles with heat absorbing capacity could also be used. Heat exchangers should be included in all new builds as should technologies to increase grey water use for things such as toilet flushing.

In a similar context to reducing energy consumption, reducing waste needs to be further considered. It was expressed that the Council could further expand its recycling scheme to include glass collection to prevent car journeys to bottle banks or landfill. Household waste sites need to be more easily accessible and user friendly in the local area. There was strong agreement that manufacturers should be more accountable. They should be taking more responsibility for harmful pollutants used in their products such as chemicals and gases when they have exceeded their life expectancy and are to be disposed of. Pressure should also be put on manufacturers to reduce packaging.

*Following on from the meeting the following comment was forwarded by email:
"The whole process of privately-funded renewable energy projects needs to be made much more public, open and relayed by the media".*

3. Policy DM26 - Re-use of vacant School Buildings and Playing Fields

There was strong support for this policy.

There is a potential for the re-use of existing buildings for community facilities that are needed to address local shortcomings. The potential facilities include play areas and playing fields, youths clubs, training for life and education facilities, day care, care homes, meeting places for disabled and elderly people. The Lothingland Middle School site was suggested as a site that could be use for the rugby club or for care facilities but this would be difficult because of the remoteness and poor public transport.

Community benefits that would be gained by using existing school sites are widespread, as most sites are located very close to or within residential areas increasing the accessibility for many people.

Facilities that are provided for and used by the local community are likely to increase community ownership and hence reduce anti-social behaviour such as vandalism.

There were concerns raised over funding and how this would impact on delivery. Housing on these sites did not gain much support although it was acknowledged that some housing may be required to help deliver the facilities needed by the community. If housing was incorporated this should reflect local need and be appropriate to the area.

There were concerns over how the closure of local schools would impact small communities.

It was suggested the policy should directly incorporate the protection of playing fields.

If you, or someone that you know, requires this document or a summary of it in an alternative format or language please contact the Waveney District Planning Policy Team. Telephone 01502 523029 or email planningpolicy@waveney.gov.uk

Waveney District Council
Town Hall
High Street
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR32 1HS

Website: www.waveney.gov.uk/LDF