

13th March 2018

Breckland District Local Plan EIP

Programme Officer

Elizabeth House,
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RS.1



**RE: Examination of the Breckland District Local Plan (2011 – 2036) (the Plan)
Schedule of Matters and Issues for the Examination**

I wish to make a representation on item 5.2 *Is the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy GEN 03 justified and based on robust evidence? Is each settlement in the right category?*

I contend that Bawdeswell has been wrongly classified as a Local Service centre as a result of what appears to be a 'tick box' exercise against the limited criteria and in the face of opposition from the Parish Council.

I take particular exception to the way in which the listed criteria were applied to the village of Bawdeswell although my concerns may be valid for other villages so designated.

In respect of the 5 items listed

School - Bawdeswell has a primary school which could probably be expanded to accommodate more children. However, this school became part of an academy last year and I have seen no evidence that Breckland have approached the Academy Trust to get a definitive answer on maximum possible pupil numbers. My local information suggests that the school is already 'stretched'. I believe that Breckland based their information on that supplied some time ago by Norfolk County Council who are no longer responsible.

Shop/Post Office - Bawdeswell has one shop, McColls, which does carry a range of food, alcohol, snacks etc. In the recent bad weather the shop ran out of Bread & Milk, sandwiches, snacks and other essential items as delivery vehicles were unable to access the village. The Butchers shop closed 2 years ago and is now being converted to residential occupation. There is limited shopping available at the Garden Centre but this is rather 'upmarket'. The Post Office is nominally open only on 2 mornings a week for 3 hours but does not open on a fairly regular basis when the Postmaster is not available.

Community Facility - Bawdeswell has a very good Village Hall opened in 2015. I am proud to be a Trustee of this facility. We are fortunate, and perhaps unique in having a small pub in the village which opened in 2002.

Employment - Breckland quote 'The Inter-Departmental Business Register (2016) shows 23 businesses within the parish with 5 employing 10 or more people'. This may well be accurate but gives absolutely no information about employment opportunities. The main employers are McColls shop, Bawdeswell Garden Centre, Hamptons Restaurant/Gift shop, Cobb Breeding Company & Bawdeswell Garage. None of these businesses is likely to recruit additional staff and many of the 23 are sole traders with no staff at all. There has been a small expansion at Cobb Breeding Co but only about half a dozen jobs have been created

Public Transport - The information shown by Breckland is quite inaccurate. The X29 service is hourly Mon-Friday and less regular at weekends. There are no services in the evening. The Konnect Bus and Sanders services on Fridays are not publicised in Bawdeswell and I have never actually seen either in the village. The 10.35 Dereham to Bawdeswell is irrelevant as there is no way to get into Dereham any earlier. The 14:45 service is actually at 14:25. The Sanders 80 service times are 10:02 and 13:40 return. There is no return service available to our nearest Market Town of Reepham.

In respect of items not listed

Medical Services - The nearest Doctors Surgeries are at Reepham, North Elmham and Swanton Morely (Nurse Led). There is no public transport available to access any of these other than by travelling via Norwich or Fakenham which would take at least two hours. There is a Community Car Scheme run by the Parish Council but for those of us who can drive the only practicable way is to travel by car. It is of note that this used to be one of the criteria for an LSC but was removed by Breckland.

Water & Utilities - There have been problems with sewage in the Hall Road/Two Fields Way/ Paradise Lane areas for many years. There is an issue with surface water backing up during heavy rain and also with sewage overflowing which Anglian Water seem to be oblivious to and in denial of.

Local Roads - The village is accessed by the A1067 and the B1145 – There are two access points from the A1067 at the Junctions with Norwich Road and Foxley Road, both of which and especially the Norwich Road junction, are extremely busy at peak times. At the Norwich Road (B1145)/A1067 junction there are often as many as a dozen vehicles queuing to turn right which effectively blocks anyone from turning left. Large HGV's are frequently stopped on the B1145 to deliver to the Garden Centre and with the queues of traffic waiting to go onto the A1067 the exit from the A1067 onto the B1145 becomes blocked resulting in a queue on the A1067. The B1145 & B1147 roads are also significant access roads and their junctions on to the A1067 from the South are also often very busy. A section of Paradise Lane leading to Paradise Road has a footpath shared with the road which presents some danger to pedestrians. Paradise Lane from the junction of Paradise Road and Dereham Road from the Junction of Paradise Lane both down to the blocked off junction with the A1067 where they join are single track roads. No local roads (only the A1067 and the B1145) are gritted although some grit bins have been provided. Parking within the village is becoming a problem with vehicles on the footpath and on blind corners.

I submit that the fundamental process used by Breckland to identify Local Service Centres is flawed.

Your faithfully

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