

Examination of the Breckland District Local Plan 2011 -2036

The Parish of Yaxham - Statement with reference to Matter 14 - Strategic urban extensions, housing site, allocations and settlement boundaries, and particularly 14.86 “Is the Yaxham settlement boundary, as shown on Map.17 justified?”, in line with the “made” Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan.

This is a supplementary statement following the submissions by the Yaxham Parish Council and Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, dated 2nd October 2017, in response to Breckland’s Proposed Local Plan Pre-Submission Publication and Consultation.

Throughout the preparation of the emerging Breckland Local Plan, the consultations undertaken by Breckland utilised the settlement boundaries as shown in Map 17. No other settlement boundary has been proposed or consulted on. See:

- Breckland Local Plan Part 2 Emerging Site Options, December 2015 (Reg 18 Consultation), p131;
- Breckland Local Plan Preferred Site Options and Settlement Boundaries September 2016 (Regulation 18 Consultation), p166, fig 26.1

Throughout the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan consultations at Regulation 14 and 16, and at Independent Examination it used the same settlement boundaries as Breckland. The Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan Referendum on 5th May 2017 achieved a parish turnout of 58% and a 92% YES vote in favour of the Plan. 53% of the electorate voted “Yes”. County elections that day achieved only a 35% vote. It was the first Neighbourhood Plan in Breckland to be “made” – 22nd June 2017.

At the time of the referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan in May 2017 the number of dwellings in the Parish of Yaxham was some 360. Of these 204 were documented within the settlement boundary of Yaxham, 100 within the settlement boundary of Clint Green (over 1km to the east), 6 were in the hamlet of Brakefield Green, with no settlement boundary, 3km south of Yaxham, and the balance of dwellings were individual farmsteads. This is what has been voted on and Yaxham submits that this is what should appear in the Local Plan. At no stage therefore has the settlement boundary been challenged.

It is worth noting that in the Neighbourhood Plan policy HOU1 there is flexibility to accommodate organic small scale growth abutting the settlement boundary if “It is of an appropriate scale and design to the settlement”. Emerging Local Plan Policy HOU4 provides a similar facility. This suggests that the settlement boundary is not as rigid and limiting of development as Breckland’s current Development Plan Core Strategy.

In the event that Yaxham was to be designated as a Local Service Centre the settlement boundary may have been re-drawn to include sites designated for development. Yaxham has not been designated as a Local Service Centre, so no new amendment is required of the settlement boundary.

The erroneous settlement boundaries shown in the Local Plan Policies Map Part 11 appear to have crept in when the Council “made” the Neighbourhood Plan on 22nd June 2017. The Yaxham Policies Map was amended to reflect the Neighbourhood Plan Policies. It would appear that the wrong Policies map was used with the wrong settlement boundaries. There is nothing in the Council Meeting Minutes (see attachment), which proposed or agreed any change to settlement boundaries. It appears that this simple mistake was then erroneously incorporated in the emerging Local Plan.

We therefore believe that the consulted and voted on boundaries are justified and should be retained as per Map 17.

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Attachment: Extract from the Minutes of Breckland Council Meeting, 22nd June 2017

103/17 YAXHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (AGENDA ITEM 11)

Gordon Bambridge, the Executive Member for Growth, was pleased to present the Neighbourhood Plan for Yaxham for adoption. He felt that the residents involved had worked extremely hard in getting this Plan together.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan be confirmed and “made”, as written at the time of the referendum, as part of the statutory development plan for Breckland Council, as required by paragraph(4)(a) of Section 38A of the Town and Country Planning Act;
2. this decision be published as required by paragraph(9) of Section 38A of the Town & Country Planning Act;
3. Yaxham Parish Council and any other prescribed persons be advised about this decision, to meet the requirements of paragraph(10) of Section 38A of the Town and Country Planning Act; and
4. the Breckland District Policies Map be amended to meet the requirement of paragraph 9 of the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.