

CRINGLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013-2026
CONSULTATION STATEMENT

Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Regulations

1. Introduction

1.1 Early in 2011 Cringleford Parish Council were approached by South Norfolk District Council and asked to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan as a follow up to our recently produced Parish Plan. We were offered this as part of the Front Runners Project and in May 2011 Cringleford Parish Council were confirmed as a Front Runner.

1.2 In September 2011 Cringleford Parish Council set up a sub-committee of the Chairman, 4 Councillors and the Parish Clerk to progress the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the first sub-committee meeting was held on 9th September 2011.

2. Initial Exhibition

2.1 A Public Exhibition was held by South Norfolk Council to advertise the Joint Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations at Waitrose Car Park on 8th October 2011 and the Parish Council joined with them to get the public's opinion on the need for a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The general consensus was a Neighbourhood Development Plan was a positive way forward for the village.

3. Statement of Community Involvement

3.1 A Statement of Community Involvement was produced and advertised on the Council's website setting out how the Council would communicate with parishioners and the statutory consultees.

4. Public Exhibition Weekend – Vision and Objectives

4.1 Cringleford Parish Council then held a Public Exhibition and all parishioners and statutory consultees were invited by written invitation. The Exhibition was held on 25th/26th November 2011 at the Pavilion, Oakfields Road, Cringleford and invited comments and observations from the 109 parishioners and statutory consultees in attendance. The Exhibition included photos of the area, maps of the sites put forward for development and historical information about the area and the steps leading up to the production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Sub-committee members were on hand to answer questions and invite people to record their views on the forms available. Children were encouraged to either, draw a picture, write or tell the team about the things they liked or wanted to see in the village.

4.2 Focusing on the responses received the Council drafted a Vision Statement and Objectives for the Plan. They also started investigating the major issues that concerned parishioners, densities of any future development, protection of the environment and in particular the land indicated in the previous Local Plan and known as the Norwich Southern Bypass Protection Zone, provision of recreational facilities and a new park and more footpath/cycleways.

5. Development of Questionnaire

5.1 The Parish Council then held a meeting in December 2011 where the analyzed

responses from the exhibition were used to help formulate a questionnaire to assess the wants and needs of the residents of Cringleford. The questions were based upon the five themes of environment, housing, economy, social and community issues and transport.

5.2 The questionnaire was delivered to all homes in Cringleford during the week of 10th - 17th March 2012 with a closing date of 4th April 2012 for responses. There were several response drop-off points throughout the village to facilitate ease of response and we received a creditable 23.6% return.

6. Consultation with Other Bodies

6.1 Throughout the summer of 2012 the Parish Council held numerous meetings and discussions with Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, the Highways Agency and South Norfolk District Council. We also held meetings with Brown and Company and Building Partnerships who represent the developers wishing to build in Cringleford. We have also had several communications with the Department for Communities and Local Government.

7. Application to be the Designated Body

7.1 Cringleford Parish Council formally applied to South Norfolk District Council to be the designated body to produce the Neighbourhood Development Plan in August 2012, advertised in the press in November and granted in December 2012.

8. Option Development

8.1 The Council investigated the various sites put forward for development by visiting the sites, considering the topography, noise levels, character of the area, visual impact of the A11 and A47, assessing the environment and how development might fit into the existing developed area.

8.2 A Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken by the sub-committee on all the sites put forward by developers. They also took the responses from the questionnaire to develop the options and the first draft of the Plan was produced.

9. Regulation 14 Consultation

9.1 In December 2012 the first version Neighbourhood Development Plan was collated, agreed and printed and delivered to all properties in Cringleford and the statutory consultees.

9.2 A six week consultation period was then held between 2nd January 2013 and 13th February 2013 and this was launched with a press notice from Cringleford Parish Council and an article in the Eastern Daily Press and the Eastern Evening News.

9.3 The Parish Council held a Public Exhibition on 11th/12th January 2013 in the Patteson Parish Rooms in Cringleford for anyone to come and ask any questions about the Neighbourhood Development Plan so they could make informed responses and 131 people attended over the two days, including an observer from the Department of Communities and Local Government.

9.4 An opportunity for further consultation was provided by the Cringleford School Fete on 18 May 2013. The Parish Council took a stall to display the Plans and was very pleased at the positive response from parishioners. The stall had a constant stream of visitors and answered many questions both from local people and from visitors to the village.

10. Results of first Regulation 14 Consultation

10.1 Comments were received from 42 residents. Their concerns ranged from the massive enlargement of the village likely to result from the development of land between the A47 and the existing built-up area of the village to the implications for traffic on the medieval bridge over the River Yare. Some residents confined themselves to single issues but others mentioned several concerns. Roads and traffic were major issues, closely followed by housing. Large numbers of dwellings and high building densities in areas of new development were thought inappropriate for the village and unsuitable for future residents. Increased volumes of traffic and the safety of the controlled crossing on the A11 were worries. Fewer comments were received on the environment. General support was given to policies designed to protect and enhance the natural environment and, in particular, to landscape the A47 and A11. One person wondered about maintenance. A few residents specifically mentioned society, culture and the economy. While grateful for all these comments, the Plan Team decided that they did not affect the policies set out in the draft Plan.

10.2 Norfolk Wildlife Trust, The Yare Valley Society, Natural England and the Environment Agency made important comments. These were generally supportive of the environmental policies in the Plan and no changes were required in a revised version. Colney Parish Meeting expressed concerns about the environment, particularly the strategic gaps originally envisaged for the Cringleford/Colney boundary zone by South Norfolk. The Plan Team agreed that these were important but considered that they would be protected by the landscaped zone along the A47 and the open space on the edges of the Cringleford Development Area. No revisions were made.

10.3 Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk District Council and consultants acting for developers interested in the Cringleford area made the most substantial comments received.

10.4 The County Council was critical of specific policies with respect to the provision of a new school (SCC1) and suggested that funding sources for community infrastructure (SCC2) should be specified. The County's policies for schools was re-investigated and the Plan shown to be in broad conformity, while a separate document was prepared detailing the potential sources of funding for infrastructure delivery and this is referred to in a new policy, GEN4. The County Council also drew attention to the absence of policies on the Historic Environment and on Minerals and Waste. Clarification was sought of the need to incorporate county level policies in neighbourhood development plans and the level of detail required. In the end, the County's insistence on some reference to policies in these fields led to the incorporation in the revised Plan of a set of General Policies which incorporated coverage of the Historic Environment and Minerals and Waste (GEN1 and 2). The introduction of general policies provided an opportunity to transfer the original policy on significant, but unlisted buildings (HOU10), to this section as GEN3.

10.5 South Norfolk made many detailed and helpful comments. Attention was drawn to the absence of a 'development boundary' from the Proposals Map and this was rectified for the revised version of the Plan. The use of subjective terms such as 'beautiful' and 'well managed' (HOU2) was criticised as too subjective. As far as possible, these have been removed from the revised version of the Plan, though 'human scale' has been retained since the concept is well known in urban design.

10.6 South Norfolk noted the insistence in the draft Plan on 1,200 new dwellings as the maximum acceptable to the parish and pointed out that it is contrary to the Joint Core Strategy (first draft, pp. 4, 12, 15). Attention was also drawn to potential problems with the density of 20-25 dwellings per hectare (HOU3) and an expressed preference for specific types of housing (HOU4). These policies were also of concern to consultants acting for

potential developers of land in Cringleford.

10.7 Barratts suggested that more evidence was required to justify the maximum number of dwellings preferred by the parish and argued that the 20-25 density is impracticable, as are the policies on dwellings capable of adaptation for lifetime use and built to RIBA standards (HOU9). Land Fund made the same points. Both sets of consultants also expressed concern about the rigid widths proposed for the landscape zone along the A47 (the former Southern Bypass Protection Zone) (250m, ENV1) and the landscape belt (30-50m) along the A11 (ENV2).

10.8 After detailed discussion of these comments and a re-examination of the concepts behind the suggested figures, the Plan sub-committee decided to retain the original policies on the environment and housing. These policies had been developed to accommodate the views expressed by residents through discussions at the two exhibitions mentioned above, and especially in responses to the Questionnaire. The Plan sub-committee believe they have a clear mandate from residents to retain the maximum of 1,200 dwellings and a density range of 20-25 dwellings/ha, as well as the landscape zones along the major roads. The Plan Team argue that the retention of these policies is essential to achieving the Vision for Cringleford in 2026 agreed by the parish and for attaining the Plan's wider objectives for the environment and a high-quality development. Moreover, the Team would point out that the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) requires a general conformity with national policies and local policies rather than detailed compliance.

11. Further Regulation 14 Consultation

11.1 The Revised Version of the Neighbourhood Development Plan was collated and delivered at the beginning of June to all properties in Cringleford and the statutory consultees. Copies were also emailed to the developers ahead of the consultation period.

11.2 A two week consultation period was then held between 10th June 2013 and 23rd June 2013.

11.3 During this time Don Foster MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, visited Cringleford to discuss the progress on the Neighbourhood Development Plan and seek feedback on the process and the challenges we had encountered. He complimented the Parish Council on the thought and hard work which had gone into the Plan. He was particularly impressed by the way that the community had taken into consideration infrastructure delivery alongside the Plan.

12. Results of Second Regulation 14 Consultation

12.1 The responses to the second consultation were similar to those made on the first draft of the Plan, though only 16 residents responded. The major comments came from Norfolk County Council and consultants for the developers. Discussions were also held with these organisations. Copies of the submissions from these bodies are appended.

12.2 Comments from the residents were very specific. Roads, traffic and transport were again important, but only one comment was made about housing – in favour of low densities. No changes were required to the revised Plan.

12.3 The County Council made various suggestions for rewording individual sentences in both the introductions to the sections of the Plan and also in the policies themselves. These were adopted in most cases. Comments on the number of dwellings and housing density were reiterated, but the incorporation of general policies on the Historic

Environment and Minerals and Waste into the Plan, as well as their formulation, did not attract comment.

12.4 CGMS on behalf of Barratts and Deloitte Real Estate on behalf of Land Fund made similar but more forceful comments to those employed by previous consultants acting for the developers. After careful review, the Plan sub-committee agreed to maintain its position, outlined above, and decided to make no further revisions to the Plan.

12.5 Two significant events took place during the consultation period on the revised Plan. First, Deloitte conducted a four-day conference on future development in Cringleford (10-13 March 2013), but without making clear in the publicity material that it was concerned only with its client's land and not the whole of the parish. The lack of clarity confused residents, undermining in their eyes the credibility of the Parish Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan.

12.6 Copies of the actual responses from Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk Council, Barratts and Land Fund are appended (Consultation Statement June 13 Revised Appendix).

12.7 A second event took place towards the end of the consultation period. The Parish Council received a copy of a report on measures to deal with the long-recognised 'problem' of the Thickthorn interchange with respect to new development not only in Cringleford but also in adjoining parishes - housing at Hetherset and the expansion of the Norwich Science Park at Colney, for example. The report was prepared by consultants Mott Macdonald¹ for Norfolk County Council and formed the basis of the County Council's representation on this issue. The preferred solutions are currently a) for A11 through traffic to bypass the Thickthorn roundabout by means of a new road section passing south of the roundabout, crossing the A47 by an overbridge or tunnel and rejoining the A11 at the Round House roundabout, and b) widening the A47 westbound off-slip. These proposals would affect substantial sections of land within the south-west portion of the Cringleford Development Area. The Plan sub-committee decided that as there is no certainty as to the final alignment of the scheme, it would not be appropriate to include the suggested "area of interest" on the map or the accompanying amendments to policy TRA1. Moreover, the Parish Council understands that the Highways Agency has not agreed to any specific scheme at the current time.

13. Conclusion

13.1 Following a meeting of the Plan sub-committee on 24th June 2013, when amendments and revisions were agreed, the Parish Council proceeded to prepare the Examiners' Version of the Plan. This was presented to South Norfolk Council together with the supporting documents, on 3rd July 2013 to begin the adoption process.

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Thickthorn Interchange Improvements: Concept Scheme Options Engineering Assessment (Mott MacDonald, June 2013)

Thickthorn Interchange Improvements: Concept Scheme Options Traffic Assessment (Mott MacDonald, June 2013)