

**Presentation by District Councillors Derek Davies, Peter Patrick and BDC Officer Bill Newman**

**Berners Hall. Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> July – 1900**

In attendance: M Pawzewski, C Graham, J Deacon, S Bishop, S Sturgis, V Sturgis, T Roberts, S Quantrill, A Golding, S Spiers, P Mayhew, S Pearce, J Young, A Gladding, F Agar, S Radwell, E Iskander, Kathryn Deaton

**Babergh District Council tell us we they no longer have a 5-year housing supply. According to one of our District Councillors, Derek Davis, this means that 2,420 homes have to be built across the entirety of Babergh's district by 2022.**

**How did Babergh lose its 5-year housing supply?**

**How will the loss of a 5-year housing supply affect our village?**

**How will the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" affect us and our quality of life?**

**There was a question and answer session to clarify our understanding of the implications of the five-year housing plan supply on Woolverstone and the Peninsula.**

**Peter Patrick**

Babergh are in a difficult position, the nation and so Babergh are desperately short of houses. This is a measured view and based on a study by the government. PP has no responsibility for planning but for finance. The position is essentially a shortfall in housing construction, the land is available. The government are holding Babergh to account to build the required number of houses, ones "owed" from the past years are added to the current requirement. There is a shortfall in construction. There is to be a new local plan, produced along with Mid Suffolk, which will address this shortfall. A consultation document has been prepared. Behind the plan there are sites that are volunteered for building by landowners. If they are reasonable in development terms then they will be included in the planning.

**Derek Davies**

DD is on the planning committee. Fundamentally we do need housing and it will affect the peninsula but it does depend upon the type of housing. One of the main things is a lack of housing being built not a lack of land supply. The key factor they have to take in to account is a "presumption in favour of sustainable housing". He is not entirely convinced of this as the local planning should work to meet with development requirements. It is a question of balance, we live in a rural area and we need to target social housing not simply build rows of five-bedroom houses. The most important thing is that the infrastructure has to be right to support this. Peter Patrick advised that money is not a factor in planning applications, the planning committee is an independent body. Their job is to expedite applications. If the committee turn down an application then the builder can contest this, this then costs Babergh.

**Bill Newman**

Babergh's plans on the arrival of Mr Newman 15 months ago were very outdated as the plans were based on data from several years ago. Babergh had to build 300 homes per annum, at this time the

number was decreasing each year (circa 100). The plan details: Supply, is the land available and Delivery, is the number of homes built each year. This should have been set at 300 but in previous years the Supply was good but Delivery was poor. Mid Suffolk's data was even further out of date than Babergh's and Mr Newman was given the job of merging the plans.

Babergh's local plan advises from 2011 – 2016, 220 houses per year and then from 2017 increasing to 325 houses per year. Any reduced construction on the five-year supply had to be made up, so anything not built in previous years had to be added to the five-year supply. Failure to meet this target results in a further 20% construction required as per Government policy.

BDC's CS11 Policy was challenged in the High Court which added up to 700 affected homes. In November the judgement advised that the council had failed to interpret the CS11 policy correctly. After this stage, the applications could then be approved (or otherwise) but it delayed about 350 houses being built.

Strategic Marketing, this is a judgement on the housing requirement for the next 20 years. This sets the new housing requirement at 355 houses per year.

A lot of authorities across the South of England are in the same position. BN is doing research in to the failure on delivery.

The time frame for production of a plan is 4/5 years, this needs to be sped up.

There are **three** key points:

1. How does the distribution of the houses take place? 65% should be adjacent to urban areas – Ipswich and Sudbury. This is the exact area where delivery fails. Delivery works well in rural areas.
2. The range and type of housing. In the main there is a strong demand for 3 and 4-bedroom housing. At the other end, there are not enough good quality, retirement / downsizing houses allowing people to remain in their community.
3. Relationship between infrastructure and Housing. The schools are full, doctors are full and roads are creaking. Insufficient work has been done on this and a review is currently underway on this. Builders will need to look more closely at this.

Land owners in the Parishes have proposed areas that can be developed.

A consultation process will take place starting in August but really ramping up in September. All Parish Councils will be invited. The period will last until the end of October. He asks for feedback and questions during this process.

### **Questions:**

**What is the percentage of growth expected for this area – 10%**

Can further pressure not be applied, if the supply is there are planning granted, can the delivery of this not be more "forced"? 287,000 permissions but less than 130,000 built. Getting developers to build is hard for Babergh, taking away permissions is very difficult. Peter Patrick advised that infrastructure is slow in being developed which slows the construction of houses.

**Is the key issue that planning is being sought but building then not taking place?**

Actual data on this has been sought but nothing definite back. There are however a mix of issues, delay in infrastructure, landowner issues. It has in fact been a range of issues.

**Sustainable Development. In the rush to meet targets, is policy simply going to be ignored?**

Bill Newman advised that he hopes not as the rules are now more clearly set. Derek Davies stood and agreed that he felt plans possibly could be pushed through and we need to be careful in what is approved. A neighbourhood plan needs to be in place and also be strong, it is no good to state that you do not want housing but to state where and when this should be placed.

**If infrastructure is key to a development, how are you going to get Suffolk County Council and the transport companies to support the building requirement?**

Bill Newman advised the council will start to use the traffic model which allows them to predict what is required if the build goes ahead.

The point was raised that no-one is against affordable housing. The key issue is that it has to be sustainable and it has to open to members of the local villages.