

**C**olne  
**R**oad  
**A**ction  
**G**roup



**Examination of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan**

**Submission relating to Matter 3 - Development  
Strategy**

**Being considered on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

Mr Paul Brant  
Mr Paul Davies  
Mr Christopher Dunn  
Mr Peter Lusmore  
Mr Darren Young

On behalf of 104 residents of Bluntisham  
(listed at the end of this document)

15<sup>th</sup> June 2018

## Issue

Whether the Development Strategy is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

### Relevant policies – LP2-LP11

#### ***Local Service Centres***

#### **9) Are the Local Service Centres appropriately defined, what is the basis for them?**

The definition of the LSCs has been driven by the opportunity to build rather than the availability of local services themselves.

The settlement category itself was devised very late in the Local Plan process and without consultation with key stakeholders such as Parish Councils or Ward Councillors.

The requirements to become an LSC are quantitative rather than qualitative in nature and open to interpretation. Arguably, more small settlements could have been upgraded to LSC status had they also been subject to pre-existing speculative development proposals.

Item 4.100 of the proposed Local Plan Submission states that “*Local Service Centres must all offer at least:*

- *primary school*
- *public house*
- *doctor's surgery*
- *convenience shop*
- *public hall*

Bluntisham does not qualify because it does not have a Doctor's surgery.

The main surgery for Bluntisham is Church Street Health Centre, Somersham which has one GP only, Dr Lui.

According to [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)<sup>1</sup> our GP has 2,130 patients on his list which is above the national average of 1724 patients per GP.

Dr Lui visits Bluntisham for only one and half hours per week<sup>2</sup> at the village hall which has no specialist medical facilities, no clinics and very few appointments.

This does not constitute a Doctor's surgery with adequate provision for the community of Bluntisham. Using the same statistical base as used in HDC's IDP,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/Services/gp/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=41138>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/Services/GP/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=39456>

Bluntisham would have just 0.04 of a GP assuming a 36-hour working week for Dr Lui.

Indeed, NHS England has written to HDC as recently as 17<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018<sup>3</sup> highlighting that “There is one GP branch surgery within a 2 km radius of the proposed development (BL1 Bluntisham), Church Street Health Centre, Bluntisham Branch. The GP practice does not have sufficient capacity for the additional growth resulting from this development and cumulative development growth in the area.”

Even where a facility does exist – such as the local Primary School, St Helen’s – it does not mean that capacity is available or could be made available for the additional demand for places created by the developments envisaged for Bluntisham.

As recently as 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018, Executive Head Teacher Mrs Ford, published an open letter which stated that the “school could not accommodate additional pupils within its current structure and accommodation” and that it “agreed (with the County Council) that the challenges that this development (Land allocation BL1) would bring would outweigh any potential benefits”<sup>4</sup>

Similar constraints also exist with the convenience shop and the public house.

The convenience shop is not really convenient in that it is located within the BP filling station on the busy A1123 at the south west extremity of the village.

The public house which does lie at the heart of the community is only open evenings and at the weekends. The lease for the pub has been for sale for over 18 months<sup>5</sup> with no interest and residents fear that it may close for good as has the other public house (The Prince of Wales) which closed and is now being converted for residential use.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, please note that the IDP itself makes no attempt to qualify the level of services, facilities and infrastructure available in Bluntisham. A detailed evaluation would demonstrate the very limited nature of some of the facilities. Therefore, Bluntisham should not be designated a Local Service Centre.

## **10) Is the approach to the scale and type of development set out in Policies LP2 and LP9 justified?**

As regards the scale and type of development, proposals for Bluntisham are not justified.

LP 2 states that “*approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing, together with a limited amount of employment growth, will be permitted on sites dispersed across the key service centres, local service centres and small*

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<sup>3</sup> <http://docs.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/01422871.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://docs.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/01437074.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.rightmove.co.uk/commercial-property-for-sale/property-47691469.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://docs.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/01386551.pdf>

*settlements to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply”.*

Regarding LP2, HDC is proposing a large uplift in housing in Bluntisham with no additional employment opportunities. The scale of development will in fact not improve the vitality of the community. It will have adverse effects such as “pushing children in the existing catchment area out to surrounding schools” (Mrs Ford, Executive Head Teacher, St Helen’s Primary School)<sup>7</sup>

Diversity of housing supply is already being met in the Bluntisham and Colne area, particularly in regard to affordable housing for local people where 12 properties are currently under construction at the boundary between the 2 villages and also off Bluntisham Heath Road where an application **18/00102/FUL** for a further 20 properties (11 affordable) is being supported by the Bluntisham Parish Council.

LP 9 seeks to *“limit development primarily to sites within built-up areas, acknowledging the fact that opportunities for development within them will largely be limited to redevelopment opportunities, intensification of use and development”*

However, land allocation BL1 Bluntisham is outside of the existing built form. HDC’s own HELAA assessment clearly identifies that the proposed development would take place on grade 2 arable land, thereby constituting development in the countryside and contravening not only LP9 but also LP11 designed to avoid the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a)

### **11) What is the scale of development actually planned (including commitments) in and is this in line with the distribution set out in Policy LP2?**

Land allocation BL1 Bluntisham can in no way be described as *“limited development”*

HDC states that *“a large scale development is one where the number of residential units to be constructed is 50 or more or a land area of 2 hectares or more”*<sup>8</sup>

Land allocation BL1 Bluntisham has provision for 159 dwellings on an area of 7.1 hectares. This is more than three times larger than the qualification threshold for large scale development. In fact, this would be the ninth largest development in the whole of the district!

Assuming 2.5 people per dwelling, this single land allocation would add 20% to the existing population of the village putting further pressure on local infrastructure and going against the stated aim of LP2 to *“protect the character of existing settlements and the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside”*

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<sup>7</sup> <http://docs.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/AnitePublicDocs/01437074.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 page 289

## List of the residents represented by Colne Road Action Group

Dr A K R Fuller	Michelle Dunn	Phill Lucas
Russell Banks	Bethany Dunn	Mike Barwell
Judy Brass	Amanda Young	V Fairhurst
Robin Laud	M Neale	Mr & Mrs T Fairhurst
D R Way	Victoria Neale	Malcolm O'Neil
Steven John Barrow	Natalie Ernst	Gill O'Neil
Margaret Barrow	Matthew Ernst	C Harrison
T J Guy	Sarah Cooper	Katherine Woods
P D Way	Martin Cooper	Michelle Stoneham
G E Routledge	Alison Knowles	Keith Lipscomb
John Routledge	John A Morgan	Ann Lipscomb
D S Moorman	Susan E Morgan	Ian Lipscomb
Wendy Richardson	A P Parker	Lauren Brant
Ruth Jarvis	J W Parker	Bronwyn Leask
Manda Lusmore	Brian Richardson	Jane Hart
Simon Budd	Susan Delaney	Tina Cornah
Rob Butterworth	R H Delaney	Patrick Cornah
Susannah Harris	David W Owen	Maria J Dorman
Ian Shepherd	R G W Everest	P Myers
Andrea Shepherd	S J Everest	G Myers
K Harrison	Carol Arrowsmith	Barrie Stoneham
Gavin Deane	David Goodier	J V George
Steve Smith	Sarah Goodier	A M Brooks
Ashley John Thompson	V McGarrey	R M Brooks
Deborah Ann	Amie Lill	Diana Wilson
Thompson	Barry Lill	John M Wilson
T R Pomfret	Dr Beverley Sherbon	David Bullinaria
C A Pomfret	Jane Godfrey	Caroline Chipper
M Darbyshire	Ian Fitzsimmons	Andy Lyons
K Darbyshire	Robert Arrowsmith	Holly Lyons
R R Hewitt	Valerie Mitchell	Jenny Smith
Jacqueline Watson	Ken Mitchell	Marian Land
Steve Catchpole	Carol Tacq	Melvyn Sibson
Joseph Bun	Roger Tacq	
C M Bun	Lynn Lucas	