



DISCUSSION PAPER AND VILLAGE SURVEY JULY 2018

BLACKMORE VILLAGE HERITAGE



BRENTWOOD DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION



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BLACKMORE VILLAGE HERITAGE AND THE LDP JULY 2018

DISCUSSION PAPER TO INITIATE FURTHER DEBATE TO CREATE A FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR BLACKMORE VILLAGE.

1. CONTEXT AND UNDERSTANDING

Between January 2016 and the January 2018 iteration of the Brentwood Borough Council Local Development Plan (BBC/LDP), the status of development sites previously identified within Blackmore Village (076 and 077) has changed from being excluded to included in the LDP. This amounts to 96 dwellings or an increase of almost 30% in terms of total housing numbers.

If allowed to proceed it will change the character of historic Blackmore Village, and its heritage, forever. In addition it risks diluting the strong community that exists in the Village. There are very few villages in the Brentwood area that have a thriving sense of community. The scale and level of the proposed development undermines the culture and ethos of the Village and runs contrary to the vision of BBC 'we will continue to protect our key assets including the environment, heritage and character of the Borough'.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to summarise what has happened locally since the meeting at BBC offices on 22 May 2018 and a follow up discussion with Jonathan Quilter (JQ) on 19th June 2018. It is an evidence based report, which we felt obliged to research and write, given our concerns about engagement and interest during the Reg 18 consultation process. Our initiative led to 401 written responses to our survey.

BBC has agreed to meet again at your offices on 31st July 2018 and our exit objective from that meeting is to initiate constructive debate between BBC, Blackmore, Hook End and Wyatts Green Parish Council (PC) and our recently created 'Blackmore Village Heritage' group (of interested residents – BVH). Such debate should cover periods pre and post Reg 19, and this discussion paper therefore represents a starting point and, hopefully, a good base from which to build our credibility.

One of the key aims of BVH is to improve communication at all levels, and to repair fracture lines between the BBC, the PC and the residents. We also wish to make some clear recommendations to ensure a more open dialogue in the future.

2. BACKGROUND AND KEY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

2.1 Please initially refer back to the PC submission in February 2018, in response to the BBC's LDP (Reg 18) consultation process. The comments are well made, endorsed by BVH, and do not require repeating in full in this paper.

BVH was formed in June 2018 to follow up BBC's agreement to allow us to provide further evidence as part of the consultation process, and ahead of Reg 19 in September. We agreed a deadline of 31st July with JQ. What the BVH group has done during the past month is:-

- Produce a Residents' Survey in two parts (see Appendix 1).
- A small group of people have knocked on every door in Blackmore Village, and spoken face to face with residents.
- The purpose was to explain/reiterate what the LDP is all about and ask them to complete the survey in order to: a) give residents the opportunity to express what they really think and b) provide BVH with firm evidence to discuss with BBC and the PC and to bring focus to future debate.
- Every BVH representative reports back that knowledge levels about the LDP, and specifically the scale of the proposed development in Blackmore Village, were at a very low level. We will provide further supporting information on request.
- We also canvassed many of the numerous visitors to Blackmore Village (e.g. a table at the recent music festival, setting up on the village green, face to face discussion with visiting cycling clubs etc). We are providing their views as further evidence too, as clearly the reason why they come to Blackmore (and help ensure the sustainability of the Village 'the way it is') is that this is a very special, attractive, historic Village, incorporating a conservation area, surrounded by beautiful green-belt land teeming with wildlife.
- A summary of the BVH evidence is included in Appendix 2. We also have a binder with all written responses, plus a summary of some ad-verbatim comments in Appendix 3.

2.2 We are keen to demonstrate that we have gathered a truly representative range of responses to our survey. At the time of writing the numbers are as follows:-

- A Total of 401 survey forms completed, of which 306 are from residents of the PC area. To place this in context there are around 300 households in the Village.
- From the Village itself 290 residents support our campaign to protect the Green Belt with only 7 in favour of the development of sites 076 and 077. Very few people refused to respond, one way or the other.
- From Part 2 of the survey (Supplementary Questionnaire), the vast majority of residents would not subscribe to any further development on the scale proposed, would support in-fill building and brown field development (endorsing the LDP position of January 2016, i.e. pre Reg 18), and in any event would want any schemes to be focused on the needs of the elderly (e.g. Villagers wishing to down-size) and for first time buyers (especially children of existing residents).
- Another concern is that, if allowed to proceed, the number of 96 dwellings could rise further, bearing in mind that in an earlier iteration of the LDP, a figure of 90 dwellings was mentioned for field 077 on its own (Woollard Way).
- There is also virtually unanimous agreement that the infrastructure of the Village will not support a significant number of additional dwellings.

3. THE KEY ISSUES TO DISCUSS IN DEPTH

We firmly believe sites 076 and 077 should be removed from the LDP, and we endorse all that the Parish Council has previously said.

3.1 Village Infrastructure and Amenities

96 houses on sites 076 and 077 (possibly more on the latter?) plus other potential schemes we hear about e.g.: developers have acquired Red Rose Farm – which immediately stretches the Village 'envelope'; a small scale development adjacent to the church is also rumoured; plus Epping Forest schemes (e.g. the site in Fingrith Hall Lane – the former Norton Heath Riding School, some 30+ houses), all add up to the Village infrastructure breaking under the strain.

In particular:-

The Village School. It is already full, and existing residents tell us they are having to send their children to schools in other locations.

The Doctors Surgery. As you have heard previously, waiting times for pre-booked appointments are approximately ONE MONTH. We have tested this recently and it remains the same or marginally worse.

Vehicle volumes and Parking. Around Horsefayre Green and the Co-op we already have a massive problem. The photographs in Appendix 4 around the corner of the Green and Fingrith Hall Road are typical, and the Co-op remains busy for a lot of the day. Cars are parked on double yellow lines and on the bend etc, and with cyclists ever present in the Village (many of whom drive here and park along Fingrith Hall Road) it seems only a matter of time before there will be an accident. Residents often call in at the Co-op on their way in and out of the Village, so more residents will mean more traffic chaos.

Transport corridors. Reliance on privately owned vehicles will continue to be a feature across our parish, due to the absence of other, effective, communication links. Again, more cars will compound existing problems.

3.2 Flood risk

We understand that an updated flood risk assessment is still to be undertaken? As part and parcel of this, and through personal knowledge of Villagers who have lived in Blackmore for many years, we wish to reinforce previous comments about the real risks posed by concreting over more of our fields.

By way of example, in August 1987 the village was inundated to the extent that many homes were seriously flooded. We have a photo album provided by resident Judy Wood, a picture board highlighting the depth of water along several roads (including Red Rose Lane), and other anecdotal evidence detailed in our survey.

This is not a 'one off', indeed, as recently as 2016, houses around the Green were flooded and the Village was temporarily 'cut off' again.

3.3 Current and future sustainability of Blackmore Village

Some may refer back to the previous large-scale development in the 1960's as a precedent for developing sites 076 and 077 during the coming decade. What actually happened in the 60's, 70's and 80's is that new blood entered the Village, many of whom are still active and have created a thriving community.

We have the Village Hall, Sports Field, MUGA, numerous Clubs and Societies, the bi-annual Village Fayre, the annual music festival, a reinvigorated Leather Bottle (plus recent/to come enhancements to the Prince Albert and The Bull), two busy tea rooms/antiques shop, a very busy Co-op store/Post Office and active church communities.

We also have numerous visitors on a daily basis, and this adds to the reality of a thriving, sustainable Village environment. Indeed, several of the local businesses have actively supported BVH in putting up our campaign posters, speaking with customers and helping us to complete our survey.

Whilst for some businesses more houses will mean more potential customers, none of the people we have spoken with want to see development on the scale proposed. Most, in fact, believe the Blackmore economy benefits from its existing attractiveness.

For this and many other reasons, we conclude that far from improving the sustainability of the Village, large scale housing developments will actually lead to a deterioration in the lives of Blackmore Village residents and our Heritage.

3.4 Green Belt/Village 'envelope' and contained development

- Red Rose lane is too narrow to provide access to sites 076 and 077.
- It is not a 'natural boundary' and indeed, is breached immediately once Red Rose Farm is developed.
- The fields adjacent to Woollard Way and Orchard Piece are teeming with a wide variety of wildlife (birds, fowl, rabbits, foxes, etc etc). We are raising our concerns with Essex Wildlife Trust, and intend to enlist their support if at all possible.
- We appreciate that some Green Belt land will have to be released for development if BBC is to meet its target of 7600 new homes, but there needs to be proportionate share of the burden across the Borough, across the Villages, taking into consideration all the other points made in this paper. A 30% increase in housing in this historic Village not only does not make sense, it is plain unfair.
- Looking purely at numbers, and deducting the Dunton Garden Suburb development from the overall target of 7600, then deducting Brown field sites and in-fill, existing planning consents etc. a fairer way to look at this on Green Belt terms is to work on percentages, and ask each Parish to come up with plans for its 'fair share', producing jointly owned strategies with BBC.
- In Reg 18 LDP, there are other sites within the BBC area that appear more logical for development - for example in Brentwood and Ingatestone town centres. Furthermore as one of our ad-verbatim quotes highlights there are a total of 43 Green Belt sites on the edge of larger villages, of which 37 were discounted and, of the remaining 6, Blackmore represents 57% of the proposed total allocation.
- We have already demonstrated how Rother District Council and Salehurst & Robertsbridge PC approached the LDP, via a Neighbourhood Plan (one of many examples across the UK), and even if it is now too late to back-track, a more strategic approach to this is necessary, before Reg 19 is signed off.

3.5 Heritage Issues

We intend to investigate and enlist support from recognised bodies. With many listed buildings of historic interest and a Conservation area within the Village, we hope to provide additional evidence to support a case for significantly reducing the impact of the LDP on Blackmore Village.

4 OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT BVH WISH TO DISCUSS WITH THE BBC AND THE PC

4.1 Traveller Settlements

The ever growing Travellers site on Chelmsford Road. During the course of discussions with residents this is another issue that generates much 'heat'. Apart from the illegal nature of the site (what is happening about that?), there is further impact on Village infrastructure and the Village 'climate'.

4.2 Driving speeds through the village

These are already anti-social and dangerous. We urgently need a 20 mph speed limit and measures to enforce it. Residents, including BVH supporters, are willing to assist in a neighbourhood initiative. One of the many consequences of this is that the Duck Ponds (which are a focal point of the Village) were once teeming with wild life including a large number of ducks. Years of speeding traffic hurtling through the Village has sadly killed scores of them. This year for the first time in at least 3 years a group of six ducklings hatched, it appears all of them have been run over on the road between the two ponds.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 There needs to be a clear strategy for future development in Blackmore Village. This should be considered in line with an overall strategy for all of the villages within the Brentwood Borough.

The strategies need to be formulated after:-

- Effective consultation with Residents, Neighbourhood Forums and the like, Parish Councils and owners/operators of Infrastructure and Amenities.
- Completing an Impact Study for each Village. Some will already be sustainable and of special interest (Blackmore included), whereas others will need the type of 'boost' that Blackmore received in the 1960's. All risks (e.g. flooding) need to be considered before the LDP is finalised.
- The BBC Vision is reviewed and reflects what it genuinely wants the outcome of the LDP to be, with strategies to support it.

- 5.2 Communication. For the benefit of everyone, especially those without computers and/or a genuine working knowledge of the LDP/Planning matters, there needs to be:-

- Proper consultation/discussion between BBC/PC/BVH *before* anything gets communicated, so there is a clear plan which we all work to, in a co-ordinated manner.
- Face to Face discussions are vital, as we have now proven on two occasions (the first being 2015).
- A special purposes Circular, written in plain English, needs to go to every household (in addition to other media e.g. The Herald, Facebook, BBC letters, BBC LDP Web-Pages). Salehurst and Robertsbridge PC provides a great example of 'joined up working'.
- Access to the BBC Web-Pages needs to be simplified and supplemented by other means of understanding and communication.
- Public Forums need to be held more regularly and must include a presentation and a panel for Q and A. Recent 'drop in' events have not been successful, a point made by everyone who attended the most recent 'drop-in' evening at Tipps Cross.

- Blackmore Village Heritage undertakes to help with the communication process, including the door to door approach in line with previous experience. Individuals to be selected according to knowledge and communication skills.

5.3 Final recommendation

For all the reasons stated above, and to support the stance of the PC in February 2018, BVH firmly believes that the Green Belt sites 076 and 077 should not be developed, whereas further in-fill and development on brown field sites (e.g. Red Rose Farm) should be considered. Opportunities to ensure BBC achieves its LDP objectives must not be opportunistic/'developer-led', rather there needs to be a rational strategy, linked to the BBC vision, not only for Blackmore but for every Village in the Borough.

BILL RATCLIFFE and TINA HARRINGTON
for and on behalf of **BLACKMORE VILLAGE HERITAGE**
July 2018



URGENT – YOUR VIEWS NEEDED BY 16TH JULY 2018

BLACKMORE AGAINST BUILDING ON THE GREEN BELT

Did you know:

- That Brentwood Borough Council’s Development Plan has identified land within Blackmore Village, sufficient for around one hundred new homes to be constructed... and it could be more?
- Two well known Housebuilding Companies have already acquired Options to purchase two fields in Blackmore? One of these is between Redrose Lane and Woollard Way, the second being the other side of Fingrith Hall Road, linking with Orchard Piece. Both are green belt.

The two Builders have indicated to the Council that c.56 homes can be built on one field and c.40 homes on the other. If both schemes find their way into the final Development Plan, it will increase the number of homes in Blackmore by almost **30%**, and potentially more if further land is proposed for development and/or the two current schemes grow in size. The infrastructure of the Village could struggle to cope and the look and feel of our special Village would change forever.

If you like Blackmore ‘the way it is’, and if you are interested in helping to protect our Green Belt, then please do not wait and see what happens, rather make sure that:

- 1 You read/re-read the note circulated by our Parish Council in February 2018, and the February edition of “The Herald”.
- 2 You spend proper time on the Brentwood Council web-site and read the Development Plan in full... yes, it’s dull, but they are still willing to consult with residents and this is our opportunity to help shape the future.
- 3 You also read the supplementary Questionnaire attached and complete as you see fit.

OUR CLOSING DATE IS 16TH JULY.

To enable us to complete a “Blackmore Report” by the end of July, please don’t delay. Your views will count, and leaving it to others might not end up getting the result you want.

BLACKMORE AGAINST BUILDING ON THE GREEN BELT

Do you oppose the building of a housing development(s) on green belt land in Blackmore?

Yes

Signature:

Name:

No

Address:

Email:

BLACKMORE AGAINST BUILDING ON THE GREEN BELT

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONNAIRE

1 If there is to be housing development in and around Blackmore, where should it be concentrated?

2 If you do approve of some development, what type / scale would you like to see?

	YES	NO
(i) "Social"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) "Affordable"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii) All Private	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) A mix of (i) (ii) + (iii)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(v) Large scale (30+)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(vi) Very small scale (under 30)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Should any additional homes be primarily targeted at :

	YES	NO
(i) The elderly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) First time buyers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii) For the disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 If there is to be housing development within the village boundary, what changes will need to be made to the infrastructure and amenities:

	YES	NO
(i) Roads (including widening)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) Parking (e.g. around the Green)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii) Availability of school places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) Availability of Doctor's appointments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(v) Water drainage and flood defences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(vi) Sewerage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(vii) Other – please state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

5 Any other comments you wish to record

Signature:

Name:

Address:

Email:



BLACKMORE VILLAGE HERITAGE

Survey July 2018

Breakdown of forms received:-

Road	Yes	No	Total rec'd
Fingrith Hall Road	30	1	31
Fingrith Hall Lane	4	0	4
Jericho Place	7	0	7
Spriggs Lane	3	0	3
Orchard Piece	48	0	48
Meadow Rise	35	3	38
Woollard Way	38	0	38
Blackmore Road	10	0	10
The Green	29	1	30
Church Street	12	0	12
Blackmore Mead	11	0	11
St Lawrence Gardens	8	0	8
Blacksmiths Alley	3	0	3
Poplar Close	7	0	7
Nine Ashes Road	27	0	27
Chelmsford Road	18	2	20
Blackmore Village Sub total	290	7	297
Hook end & Wyatts Green	9	0	9
Blackmore Village & Parish Area Sub total	299	7	306
Brentwood Area	37	0	37
BBC Sub total	336	7	343
Outside B BC & Village	50	1	51
Misc	1	0	1
Only signatures - no addresses	6	0	6
Total	393	8	401



BLACKMORE VILLAGE HERITAGE

TYPICAL AD – VERBATIMS FROM SURVEY

JULY 2018

1. RE FLOOD RISKS

- 'This (flooding) I have witnessed on a number of occasions in my business career as a chartered surveyor. In my opinion increased risk of flooding would be a real concern in this area and therefore its inclusion in the development plan must be contested.'
- '.... when rainfall is extreme, the streams and drainage pipes are overwhelmed with flooding of roads which is common and sometimes with danger to homes. The last 'near miss' was in June 2016, when we are aware that the home of one of our neighbours was flooded by waters rising from underneath the house'.
- A handwritten letter from Diane Smith, The Forge, Blacksmiths Alley – this provides a really graphic account of what actually happened in 1987..... 'all her furniture was flooding out....Stuart's house was table deep....a lady was crossing the wooden bridge from Church Meadow, the bridge broke.....after a while they managed to pull her out of the water...she, like the Fireman, could have gone into the underground pipes and drowned, but she was spotted in time...etc etc'.

2. INFRASTRUCTURE, AMENITIES, TRANSPORT ETC

- Bus.... 'Travelling between timetable and out of hours requires a car, increasing traffic on our country lanes'.
- 'Housing development should be near good public transport access and near schools'.
- 'Blackmore and the surrounding area are enjoyed by runners and cyclists who travel from towns..... they will be subjected to increased danger with an increase in traffic on the country lanes'.
- Primary school..... 'Full to capacity – travel to schools outside the area adds to increase in traffic' – (comment repeated consistently during our survey).
- Doctors Surgery..... 'It is difficult to obtain a doctors' appointment in a reasonable time' (comment repeated consistently during our survey).

3. PLANNING/GENERAL

- 'Scale of development should be relative to current size of Blackmore, and developments elsewhere'. (Comment repeated consistently during our survey).
- 'Looking at the list of 'Green Belt land on the edge of larger villages' there are 43 sites: 13 discounted for various reasons; 24 discounted for 'Green Belt impact'; 6 proposed draft allocation. WHAT MAKES the Green Belt impact on Blackmore less of an issue than it is on 24 sites discounted for 'Green Belt' impact'? One is a small strip of land on the side of the A12.....hardly prime Green Belt. Of the 6 proposed sites the two main sites in Blackmore are 57% of the proposed total allocation'.
- 'Blackmore is a lovely Village in which to live, a thriving community life.....large scale building projects would totally ruin the charm of the Village, small building projects (10-20 houses) could be integrated more easily without spoiling the character of the Village' (a sentiment shared by dozens and dozens of other residents).



PHOTOS OF ROADS AND PARKING



FLOOD RISK





BLACKMORE VILLAGE HERITAGE

ABOUT US

A group of motivated residents, who truly care about Blackmore Village, and who seek to engage constructively with others to ensure we have a voice in the future planning and protection of our lovely heritage.

Founded in June 2018 by Bill Ratcliffe and Tina Harrington, we have galvanised a large group of supporters who are encouraging us to continue our activities.

As we go to print, Blackmore Village Heritage is in course of becoming a constituted group, a 'not for profit' organisation, which will aim to adopt the principles of a 'neighbourhood forum'.

Our objective is to become a recognised body of people who understand the issues, are well versed in business, legal and planning matters and who are recognised by Borough and Parish officials, and others.

We are grateful to Messrs Drane and Quilter for allowing us to present this discussion paper to the BBC.

We will forward details of our governing document/constitution on request. Any guidance you can give us in order to ensure the success of our Neighbourhood Forum will be much appreciated.