

28-September-2024

Local Plan 2021-2040 Main Modifications Part 1 Consultation
Planning Policy Team
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Kings Court
Chapel Street
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE30 1EX



Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PROPOSAL – KEY RURAL SERVICE CENTRE SECTION 11 – MARHAM (11.1)

With relation to Section 11 and Policies LP10, G56.1 & MAR1, contained in the Local Plan 2021-2040.

GENERAL

Marham Village and the RAF Base have been combined into one area, it is only by combining the 2 settlements it ensures that it can be designated as a Key Rural Service Centre, as separate settlements they would not meet the criteria.

However, it is clear to see on the attached map, that they are 2 distinct areas, geographically separated, by road and footpath, by approximately 1.5 miles in either direction, from the centre of the village. Both routes contain steep hills, not accessible on foot by the majority demographic of the village.

It has been designated that Watlington, a much larger settlement, and, the other Key Rural Service Centre, which has a Main Line Railway Station to King's Lynn, Downham, Market, Ely (change hub), Cambridge and ultimately London, along with various bus routes, has been allocated a requirement of 32 houses to be built.

This is completely disproportionate to Marham, who have been allocated a requirement of 85 houses to be built, when the only public transport available is a limited bus service, available to King's Lynn only (Monday to Saturday, - not available on Sunday's or Bank Holidays).

There is no public transport to the nearby towns of Downham Market or Swaffham, despite Swaffham being the Secondary Education Centre for the Marham catchment area. With the amenities available to Marham, currently this leaves no option for residents than to use a car as a requirement for most of their journeys for employment or general day to day living requirements. This means that Marham, as a Key Rural Service Centre, is in direct opposition to the Council's stated policy of:

- "Minimising and reducing carbon emissions by locating new developments in areas to minimise the need to travel and maximise the ability to make journeys through public transport"

And

- "Supporting sustainable transport systems and contribute to more walkable and cyclable localities"

I understand that RAF Marham is an asset of strategic importance to the borough, and that supporting growth of this asset would bring benefits. However, the type of expansion available at RAF Marham, eg provision for BAE Training Centre, does not correlate with the expectations of these personnel to want to 'settle' in the very near vicinity of the village and the RAF Base.

Indeed, history shows that, the majority of personnel, who do wish to settle in the area, prefer places such as, Downham Market (DM), Swaffham and the outskirts of King's Lynn (KL), due to the greater number of facilities available, both day to day and leisure activities (eg Swimming Pool – KL & DM) and the increased access to various methods of public transport.

This is further shown by the fact that a previous residential development, with full planning permission from many, many years ago, within the village, have not been built (8 plots – divided over 2 areas) and are now indeed, up for sale again, as the building contractor has decided not to build.

(Site one (21/01787/F) is a development of six, two-storey detached dwellings with associated private accesses and parking on existing vacant land at Land NE of Lion Farm House, The Street, Marham, Norfolk. Site two (21/01750/F) is a development of 2 dwellings at Land Rear of Waterworks House, The Street, Marham, Norfolk.)

It should also be noted that since the issue of the previous document the following have occurred:

The operational base has in fact shrunk and it is no longer the biggest operational base and is unlikely to expand in the future

50% of the employment on the base has declined (Civilians, BAE and Contractors)

160+ Former RAF Marham Married Quarters - housing being sold off to private buyers

Permanent residents have reduced by 900+

The previous Policy Map (17) within the Local Plan, showed only 1 area of development within the village, however the text described 2 areas. The 2nd having some dispute over where it was actually located and the naming convention.

The 2 areas designated now are:

G56.1 – Land at The Street (planning obtained)

MAR1 – Land south of The Street

The naming convention alone, suggests that MAR1 is further removed from the main street, when, in fact, it is on exactly the same trajectory as site G56.1 – both directly adjacent to the highway and less than 200m apart.

To include 2 major developments, this close together, and in one case, simply infilling a space, is in direct opposition to the Borough's policies on maintaining that the potential adverse impacts are minimised, the impact on the environment and protecting the countryside for its intrinsic character and beauty.

SITE – MAR1

With the above in mind, I wish to lodge my objection to the proposed potential development site marked as MAR1 – Land south of The Street on the attached map.

I understand the need to provide further homes in the future, however, I feel that this site has the greatest impact on the largest number of residents and would have a detrimental effect on not only the immediate area but also on the village as a whole. I feel that site MAR1 is therefore inappropriate for the village for the following reasons:

Economical

Current number of new houses being built along with planning granted for G56.1, existing properties that are for sale in the village and at the RAF base is currently appropriate

Local Infrastructure/Amenities

No Mains Drainage

Doctors surgery – lack of capacity for increase in number of residents

Local Schools over-subscribed – lack of available resource for Pre-School, Infant and Junior

No Village Shop

No Post Office

Current Parking/Access issues around the Junior School and local area (Hillside)
These issues would be exacerbated

Social Fabric of the Village

Cemetery – no future room for expansion

I, and other villagers, had been led to believe that this area, (MAR1) had been designated for future expansion

A Village Cemetery is a place of peace and solitude, where people are able to be alone with their loved ones and their thoughts.

Parking along “The Street” when a funeral takes place is currently experienced, expected and accepted. This would no longer be possible.

Currently occupied by sheep and a horse – maintaining the natural element of the countryside

The two disparate areas of the village are maintained rather than integrated.

Note: This site was put forward during the ‘offers for land’ process. It was purely a hand drawn representation of the field shape, nothing more, by the owner who resides in the USA and has no invested interest in the village, other than for financial gain.

Previous Planning Permission

Refused for MAR1 by the Highways Agency

Environmental

Flooding – the road directly in front of the proposed land is currently susceptible to frequent flooding. This affects not only the road, but the houses directly opposite site MAR1. Further development would restrict the drainage currently alleviated by the land and affect the current houses, to a greater degree and possibly even the proposed homes.

Wildlife – includes grass snakes and a natural pond containing newts which migrate across the proposed site.

Safety

Children walking to the Junior School from the west side of the village would have to cross another major road junction – at present they have a safe, well maintained footpath along which to travel.

Traffic – current issues with speeding through the village

*In a 1-week period, in the middle of the village - recorded 850 passing vehicles exceeding 35mph

Risk of Rat-Run through proposed development site MAR1 and potential racetrack through existing Villebois Road to the proposed site

Potential traffic calming measures would be required in Villebois Road

*Source: Parish Council Road Safety Update

SITE – G56.1

I wish to lodge my continued support for site G56.1 for the following reasons:

This site has already been granted planning permission for a number of houses, and development has started


Alleviates the current parking/access issues around the Junior School and local area (Hillside)

- Development of this site impacts fewer residents
- The original plans submitted by the landowner showed room to accommodate 50+ homes with this site also able to accommodate any future expansion
- The original plans submitted by the landowner included provision of a safe footpath for residents and especially children walking to the Junior School – well away from the main road.
- Close proximity to the trodden footpath and improvements to this footpath, giving access to the amenities (albeit limited) offered at RAF Marham
- Integrates the village closer to RAF Marham geographically, albeit only by foot, and therefore supports the notion of these 2 distinct areas being treated as 1 settlement
- Agricultural land opposite, so risk of flooding is minimised
- Integrates both ends of the village
- Initial proposal, by the landowner, showed retention of approximately 3 acres of 'green space' around the proposed site, maintaining the openness of the area, however, still leaving further room for expansion if required
- 1 proposed site for development in the village as opposed to 2 different sites is preferable.

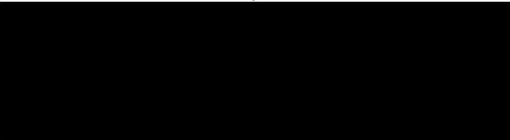
Please also see my comments on the relevant Representation Forms.

If you require any clarification of the points raised, I would be happy to discuss the matter further.

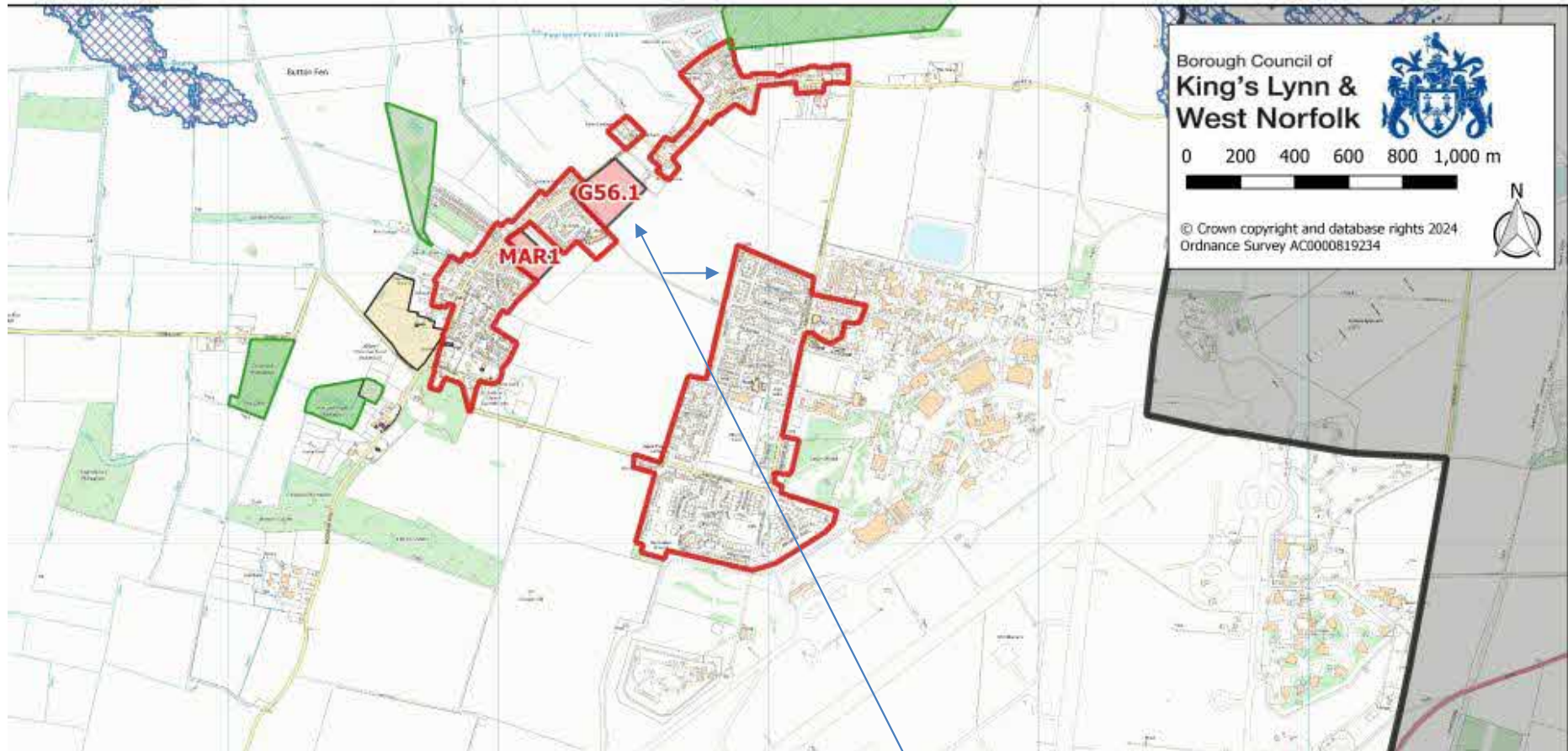
Yours faithfully



Mrs Samantha Day



Policy Map 17 – Shouldham, Marham, Wereham, Boughton, Wittington, Stoke Ferry, Barton Bendish, Wrecton



Note: Original Map Title and Map taken from Policy Map 17 (including spelling mistake in title – Wrecton should be Wretton)

Potential Expansion in the future – integrating closer to RAF Marham

Annotated with potential expansion in the future.