



## Save Our Country Spaces (SOCS)

### Ipswich Draft Local Plan Examination Statement On STAGE 2 - MATTERS AND QUESTIONS

I confirm that SOCS wish to provide further comment on Matters 4a, 4b, (5), 6, 8 & (9), 10 & 11  
I have noted deadlines for submission (5, 9).

**Matter 4a** Residential and Sustainable Development Policies and General Development Principles  
(Policies CS8, CS11, CS12, DM1, DM2, DM3, DM12, DM13, DM14, DM24, DM26,  
DM27 and DM30 plus issues relating to CS1, CS2, CS9 and SP1 not addressed in other Matters)

*4.1 Are the policies (listed above) for residential and sustainable development and general development principles soundly-based? **No as deliverability of the DMs are questionable.**  
If you contend that they are not how should they be modified?*

We will need to comment that the developers may have issues of concern relating to the DM policies (most likely on viability grounds)- but those DMs were adopted after extensive debate and public consultation and need to be robustly defended, upheld AND enforced.  
We want no backroom watering down and "negotiations" between officers and landowners this time round during the Inquiry in public as appeared the case last time in 2011, as it would seriously undermine both democratic process and public interest. There cannot be negotiation behind closed doors this time round.

We agree with the North Fringe Protection Group's comments on the following:

**\* DM3 Provision of Private Outdoor Amenity Space in New and Existing Developments Unsound.**

The trend to non-existent garden sizes proposed, will not engender a sense of place; urban cramming will not ensure social cohesion.

**\* CS2 Location and Nature of Development & CS9 Previously Developed Land Unsound.**

*"Without a PDL target for employment land we are concerned that the focus will be on greenfield development in preference to brownfield development."*

**\* SP2 Land Allocated for Housing**

Unsound.

*"Land allocated to housing. With regard to the first question, we contend that it is unsound to allocate land for the development of the **entire** Ipswich Garden Suburb (the Ipswich Northern Fringe) (paragraph 4.7 refers) when its delivery may not be viable over the plan timescales. The major issues are the severe adverse impact upon traffic, impact on air quality and lack of sewage pipeline infrastructure. For completeness they are mentioned here but will be dealt with in detail under Matters 5 & 9 in a later representation"*

Our principle concerns relate to the issues of "Sustainability", CS1, viability and deliverability and the capacity of the IBC Development Management Policies to provide positive guidance and influence sustainable development until 2031.

This is in relation to *our communities local knowledge and understanding* of local need for housing, jobs etc. We also have some understanding about the *flexibility* required to be built into the local planning system to respond to changing needs and changing conditions; i.e. economic, environmental and social.

Growth, however, must be measured against the **potential for serious adverse effects and serious**

**adverse impacts**, which included adverse impacts on the Quality of Life, Public Health, but also deficits in open space and loss of treasured local landscapes and heritage sites like Red House and the remainder of the former great park site.

But this Government it seems is not interested in the above it appears.

The potential to secure a “sustainable future” for the existing local population, future populations and future generations is an imperative not demonstrated by this plan.

It therefore is unlikely to serve and deliver growth reliably, adequately, sustainability, viability and deliverability up till 2031.

**CS1 as a policy direction will likely be overridden by the “Planning by Appeal” reality of the adversarial High Court administrative system. The reality is that whatever DM policies exist, they will be overridden and set aside by the NPPF 5 year Housing supply Appeal challenge, case law and current persuasive legal interpretation of the NPPF- which is only guidance at the end of the day; but case law takes precedence.**

This has repeatedly happened with neighbouring LA Suffolk Coastal District Council(SCDC), on whom IBC will have to rely on under Duty to Cooperate, to deliver some of Ipswich “Sustainable Growth” -SCDC who's Local Plan & DM policies are effectively “non operational” <sup>1</sup>.

*Suffolk Coastal's housing policy failings have caused 'planning free for all.* 13:01 26 May 2016  
It is likely Ipswich's fate will be the same.

**1.1 Are the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the plan adequately and accurately assessed in the Habitats Regulations Assessments and the Sustainability Appraisals (SAs)? Do the SAs test the plan against all reasonable alternatives?**

**In our view no.** The SA's will not have factored the enormous number of “windfall sites” generated by the NPPF 5 years supply challenges for either IBC or SCDC. The impacts of what is likely to happen within Ipswich and adjoining LA ,particularly SCDC Eastern Ipswich Fringe - **a scenario neither referenced nor discussed within the IBC Core Strategy of emerging IBC Open Space draft Policy (January 2016).**<sup>2</sup> (A background note has been published explaining how the Ipswich open space standards were reviewed and used to prepare the maps showing areas of surplus and deficit in the Draft Public Open Space SPD.)

NB The emerging draft Open Space Policy assumes a **“no growth scenario”** for the SCDC areas of Kesgrave, Rushmere Village and Marlesham village as outlined in SCDC Settlement Hierarchy Policy- however, these protection policies have been rendered “out of date” by PINS and the Appeal Court. This undermines CS16 and DM3.

A note was added to Appendix A of the background note on 26th February 2016, to clarify that the map shows only open space, sport and recreation facilities owned and/or managed by the Council.  
[https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/background\\_to\\_revised\\_public\\_open\\_space\\_standards\\_provision\\_maps\\_-\\_update.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/background_to_revised_public_open_space_standards_provision_maps_-_update.pdf)

The Open Space Policy is crucial for the Review of the CS and it still has to be adopted. Open spaces, sport and recreation facilities can perform multiple functions, which provide many social, environmental and economic benefits. They can (and should help deliver Sustainable

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[http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/suffolk\\_coastal\\_s\\_housing\\_policy\\_failings\\_have\\_caused\\_planning\\_free\\_for\\_all\\_1\\_4550376](http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/suffolk_coastal_s_housing_policy_failings_have_caused_planning_free_for_all_1_4550376)  
06/01/16 However, Mr Sharpe said the council was “impotent” and its policies “toothless” in protecting greenfield sites.  
“The failings of SCDC identified in the inspector’s decision will result in a planning free-for-all that will impact the whole district and not just Framlingham,” he added.

<https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/consultation-draft-public-open-space-spd-draft-revisions-local-list-spd-and-call-ideas>

development) & provide:

- **public health and well**
- being benefits (to mental and physical health),
- outdoor education opportunities,
- valuable habitats for wildlife,
- **air quality improvements and emission off setting,**
- air cooling
- **increased climate change resilience,**
- **water and flood management opportunities including surface water management,**
- an attractive landscape and urban environment,
- opportunities for growing food locally,
- routes for sustainable transport such as walking and cycling,
- venues for public events,
- a strong, positive identity to help attract investment and tourism, increase property values and contribute to a sense of place,
- they may contain archaeology that has been preserved in situ

**The impact from SCDC Planning" free for all" will impact on the Ramsar Sites and has not been assessed within the SA SEA or AA contrary to the EU Directive.**

**Habitats Regulation Assessments Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006**

The plan does not reliably demonstrate likely compliance with NERC- or that it is likely to fulfill the Biodiversity Duty and ensure that there is **no net loss of biodiversity on a site, particularly on the IGS.**

We note from the Ipswich Policy Area Green Infrastructure Report<sup>3</sup> 'The planned country park at the Ipswich Garden Suburb (IGS), whilst providing a key element of mitigation in relation to Habitats Regulations Assessment, would not address deficiencies under the Nature Nearby standards within the north-west part of Ipswich and around the Claydon / Great Blakenham area.' We understand from the IGS Developer Steering Group minutes (on the IBC website) that Ipswich Garden Suburb (North Fringe) landowners do not consider it is their role to mitigate for **existing longstanding deficits (outstanding since the 1960's)** nor should a requirement be placed upon them to provide relief to the local Ramsar sites which are under pressure; pressure from their own proposals as well as the compound and cumulative effects from other neighbouring development. This is contrary to the excellent 2008 Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy and Report (HAGGIS), which was required to guide the region as a "growth point" in 2001. IBC and other local authorities such as Suffolk Coastal, have more recently built their own local green infrastructure plan policies, as well as the Ipswich Policy Area the Green Infrastructure Report, on the 2008 HAGGIS, Haven Gateway work.

**There is currently no delivery mechanism to ensure the timely delivery of the IGS Country Park as**

Conclusion bullet xiii, Update of the Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Ipswich Policy Area, August 2015, Ipswich Policy Area report, [https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ipa\\_green\\_infrastructure\\_report\\_-\\_final\\_published\\_october\\_2015.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ipa_green_infrastructure_report_-_final_published_october_2015.pdf)

**an effective mitigation strategy to safeguard the Stour and Orwell Estuary Special Protection Area, protected under the Habitats Directive.** As such the Core Strategy (CS) is unsound. A delivery mechanism needs to be determined and an alternative included in the CS should the IGS Country Park not be deliverable by the required timescales.

## Sustainability Appraisals

Therefore, “*serious adverse effects*” cannot be properly identified, as required under compliance with the NPPF (**Achieving Sustainable Development NPPF 6-17**) *for either the CS or development and control purposes. This situation is likely to render any planning application almost impossible to determine properly and therefore, we say, render major IGS planning applications inappropriate and premature. It also potentially renders stakeholder responses to planning applications a problem.*

The plan fails to reliably demonstrate that IBC can secure the required compliance (along with partner stakeholders such as Suffolk County Council, Environment Agency etc) on;

- NPPF- 94 Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, **taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.**
- NPPF- 99 Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, **including through the planning of green infrastructure. (Which is in question regarding the IGS Country Park and network of green corridors)**
- NPPF-103 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere

The SA fails to fully take adequate and comprehensive account of transport, air quality, economy and wastewater issues, specifically to note the possibility that the viability of the development of the IGS may not be achievable due to the severe impact on traffic and lack of sewage infrastructure.

Part of the plan for the IGS fails to take adequate account of;

### **NPPF- 11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**

109 The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;**
- recognising the wider **benefits of ecosystem services;**
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing **net gains in biodiversity** where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing **coherent ecological networks** that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing both **new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability;** and
- **remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.**

**NB need for PDL over Greenfield high quality land like the 500 acres of Best & Most Versatile" farm and Red House Park Heritage land.**

In preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment. Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.

### **Taking full account of cumulative effects**

The SEA Directive requires that the assessment include identification of cumulative and synergistic effects including those produced by other authorities such as neighbouring local authorities

The SA does not appear to take account of the cumulative effect of Core Strategies of neighbouring authorities regarding housing, employment and especially transport/traffic with regards to increased air pollution and traffic congestion. These aspects need to be fully assessed in order for the SA to be sound.

We also note that SA does not assess the effects of around 4,000 new dwellings in neighbouring authorities to meet the IBC unmet demand.

We maintain that the SA fails to accurately reflect the state of Ipswich and presents a very optimistic view of the impacts of the CS on the Borough.

### **Summary**

- As the 2012 regulations look at “Sustainable development” (and interpretation of Sustainable Development in regard to the NPPF) we feel this plan is not sustainable, possibly not viable and possibly not deliverable.

### **Matter 6 –Employment Policies and Allocations (Policies CS13, DM25 and SP5)**

#### **6.2**

*Are the site allocations in connection with employment development soundly-based? No*

*If you contend that they are not how should they be modified?*

A revision of the draft Ipswich Garden City SPD should be made to identify extensive employment land within the IGS site rather than homes. Already existing employment land has been lost from the potential loss of 500 acres of prime farm land -with no offset or replacement- together with loss of existing industrial premises to windfall housing applications -Westerfield (North of the Railway line). Jobs are desperately needed to sustain the current faltering economic situation and serve the future of Ipswich and the IPA-IF economic stability - i.e. sustainable development (in balance) should be achieved.

### **Matter 8 –Heritage,Design and the Natural Environment (Policies CS4, DM5, DM6, DM7, DM8, DM9, DM10, DM28, DM31, DM33, DM34)**

*8.1 Are the policies (listed above) in connection with heritage, design and the natural environment soundly-based? Not if they are overridden through the Appeal system or not robustly enforced.*

*If you contend that they are not how should they be modified?*

**What about CS16?** Protection of Green gaps on the Ipswich Boundary? This requires joint working between partner LAs, so far not evidenced.

The above policies, whilst commendable, are only “sound” if the borough is capable of acting upon them and enforcing them. Currently the public perceives a reluctance to either act or enforce. We feel this to be not just a resource issue.

There are repeated worrying examples of the system and process failures now and maladministration has been found by the LGO in past years following complaints by SOCS and others.

Errors of process were identified with the Local List SPD and flaws and failures in the 2013

adopted Open Space and Biodiversity Policy 2013 and the adopted Tree Management Policy 2010.

SOCS have logged and repeatedly lobbied the Borough officers and the Planning Department and other specialist teams on these matters, as well as alerting and petitioning elected members.

The Planning and Development Management Teams SOCS have found to be seriously wanting, *especially* on enforcement eg. on TPOs and other related matters e.g. relating to Hedgerow Act.

Similarly there have been difficulties with Public Rights of Way and Definitive map.

**Serious deficits of space in the North West and East of Ipswich have never been addressed. This adversely impacts on sustainability and public health & well-being.**

**CS16 is important here.**

**The IGS SPD does not provide adequate governance of the Green Corridors and wildlife networks which are already designated and located through the area.**

Wildlife and other assessment works in the North Ipswich area & IGS area have been deficient for decades and only "desktop" inadequate appraisals have been made. **There is a total inadequacy of data currently on establishing base lines.** Most of what has been done has been the work of individuals and resident's groups which may not be formally uploaded to the data base or fully taken into account in DM policy use and discussion. The public and some elected members have been vigilant in the absence of any real interest and action on the part of the Borough it appears.

There has been serious adverse impacts on local heritage sites over recent weeks and in recent years. The vigilant public have lost faith in the Borough's capacity to protect the area and to uphold and use the policies it suggest should protect. With diminishing resources available and other pressures, SOCS do not believe that the Borough will fare any better than Suffolk Coastal District Council to address these matters by the use of the "Plan led system".

The deficit in open space could and should be address by looking seriously and critically at **reinstatement of Red House former Red House 17<sup>th</sup> Century Park** -the one suitable site of Historic importance, undesignated heritage listing, critical wildlife importance, rare trees of great maturity TPOs, ancient hedgerows and important biodiversity (Great Crested Newts, hedgehogs, slow worms, bats, badgers and owls) – as well as it's use in offsetting Climate Change and addressing flood issues. This would be fitting as it is adjacent to the Millennium Cemetery, a place of public importance and sensibility.

Following statements in italics, by kind permission of the NFPG.

- **\* Matter 10 – Non-Transport related Infrastructure and Services and Flooding**

*Q10.1 Are the policies, proposals and site allocations (listed above) in connection with non-transport infrastructure/services and flooding soundly based? If you contend that they are not how should they be modified?*

Unsound.

**\* S15 Education Provision.**

Unsound.

*"Paragraph 8.159 states that 'It is not considered by the County Council that a new secondary school site is required within the Borough boundary other than at the Ipswich Garden Suburb'. This may be the case, but there is no contingency if this site cannot be delivered in a timely manner. Our understanding is that secondary schools within Ipswich will be at capacity by 2021. New secondary schools can take many years from conception to occupation, possibly 4-5 years. There are obvious risks in having all the eggs in one basket particularly in view of the risks and slipped*

*timescales associated with the planned I,GS development. In addition the IGS Master Plan allocates the school to the Red House sector which has lagged the other 2 sectors and where outline plans have yet to emerge.*

***There is a serious risk that the required new secondary school cannot be delivered in time due to delays by the various parties in reaching agreement on the IGS infrastructure and delays associated with the proposed IGS development. For soundness a fall back option should be included in CS15."***

**<sup>1</sup> \* CS16 Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation.**

**Generally Sound (but SOCS suggest rather aspirational at present.)**

*"We support IBC's general approach to this area. However, we are concerned that the policy does not recognise the issue of access to shared outdoor sports space based at schools, especially as these may be academies outside the control of the local authority. The policy needs to reflect the requirement to ensure acceptable access arrangement to all shared outdoor sports space located at schools otherwise there is a real risk that residents will not be able to access this outdoor space. This would result in a shortfall that will detrimentally affect health and wellbeing.*

**\* CS17 Delivering Infrastructure.**

**Unsound.**

*"IBC have failed to meet the requirements of paragraphs 156 and 162 of the National Planning Policy Framework regarding the provision of water supply and wastewater and its treatment.*

*Specifically*

- Paragraph 156 NPPF requires a Local Planning Authority to set out strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan for the provision of water supply and wastewater. This has not been done.*
- Paragraph 162 places a requirement on a Local Authority to work with other Authorities and providers to assess the quality and capacity of water supply, wastewater and its treatment and ability to meet forecast demands. This has not been done.*

*These are important and serious issues since according to the Suffolk Growth Strategy<sup>4</sup> 'The East of England is the driest part of the country and water supply is critically important, not only to agriculture but to some of the businesses currently located in Suffolk. Limited water availability and increasing demands means that much of the water resource in Suffolk is considered to be fully committed, if not over committed, to existing users. With increased pressure from climate change, population growth and food security, it is more important than ever that water resources are at the centre of planning for the future. '*

*This problem and that of sewage treatment has long been recognised as an issue for Ipswich as reported in the 2009 Haven Gateway Study<sup>5</sup>. Paragraph 6.6.2 refers to sewage treatment for the North of Ipswich and it states 'Wastewater treatment will be provided by the Cliff Quay STW, which again has been discussed in Section 6.4. However, wastewater collection and transport of wastewater to the works is seen as a potential issue within the Ipswich area.' IBC have swept this issue under the carpet and seven years on we are still awaiting a solution to the North of Ipswich*

*wastewater transport infrastructure, which could undermine the viability of the IGS development.*

*Fresh water supply, wastewater and its treatment cross Local Authority boundaries, e.g. the Ipswich Cliff Quay Sewage Treatment Works treats sewage from Ipswich, Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal. It is therefore important that Local Authorities co-operate on strategic infrastructure assessing cumulative growth forecasts as required by the NPPF paragraph 162 and in accordance with the duty to co-operate as required by the 2011 Localism Act. There is no evidence that this has happened since 2009 nor that IBC has requested any such cross boundary collaboration. This matter has simply been ignored despite requests and representations from ourselves over many years.*

***For soundness the CS should recognise the importance of and fulfil the requirements of paragraphs 156 & 162 of the NPPF regarding freshwater and waste water infrastructure setting out strategic priorities and including a listing in Table 8A if appropriate.”***

Save Our County Spaces      Barbara Robinson 2/6/2016

NB \* Grey italicised acknowledgment to NFPG,