Stoke Holy Cross Parish Council.

Stoke Holy Cross Parish Council have studied the proposals in the draft local plan and our response is as follows regarding the site to the East of the Harrold place development on Long Lane Stoke Holy Cross.

Policy VC STO1

Stoke Holy Cross objects to policy VC ST01, which it considers to be unsound for the following reasons.

Stoke Holy Cross was defined as a service village deemed to be suitable for a development of between 10 to 20 dwellings in the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk adopted in 2014. Being within the Norwich policy area, additional development could be considered if necessary to help deliver ‘smaller sites’ in the defined Norwich Policy Area allowance (Policy 15: Service Villages). *‘Allocations to deliver smaller sites in South Norfolk will be made in accordance with the settlement hierarchy and local environmental and servicing considerations’*.

 Paragraph 6.61 of this policy explains that:

 *’20 dwellings may be exceeded where a specific site is identified which can clearly be demonstrated to improve local service provision or help maintain services under threat’.*

The JCS lists the presence of a village hall as an important Facility expected in service villages (para 6.60). Stoke Holy Cross Parish Council has consistently pointed out that the existing village hall (called the Pavilion) situated on the playing fields and designed to accommodate demand arising from the level of housing in the village that existed in 1983, is now too small and outdated to serve a village the size Stoke Holy Cross now is. This is partly as a result of the fact that almost 300 family type houses have been built in Stoke Holy Cross since 1983 increasing the population by almost a third. It is also due to the fact the village pre-school is now housed in the pavilion, and therefore it cannot be used for any other purpose when in session, due to statutory child safeguarding requirements.

This deficiency was brought to the District Council’s attention during the determination of the major housing development proposals at Broomefield Road and Harrold Place and resulted in a limited financial contribution being made towards community facilities. This was significantly less than required for a New Hall, partly because the money had to also be used for other community facilities that were also put under strain by the increased housing developments in the village, such as a car park to ease school elated congestion, and land to facilitate an extension to the school. The Parish Council has since been trying to accumulate funds to facilitate the building of a larger Parish Hall and has obtained planning permission and detailed costings for a replacement including greatly improved accommodation for the pre-school. Unfortunately, it still requires substantial funds to enable these plans to be realised.

The Parish Council accepts that the site which is the subject of VC STO1 is a logical extension to the village being in close proximity to the primary school and the playing fields, and would result in a ‘squaring off’ of the village in this location. It strongly disagrees however with the suitability assessment justifying the allocation of this site in Stoke Holy Cross, which considers the existing village hall as having a site score of ‘green’, when this is clearly not the case, by any reasonable assessment.

The Parish Council therefore considers that in order to rectify the current position, there should be an additional requirement in policy ST 01 for a financial contribution to be made towards a new village hall/community facilities that would facilitate replacement of the existing Pavilion that is now too small, outdated, and unsustainable as a village hall serving Stoke Holy Cross. The financial contribution is also required to improve other community facilities that are struggling to cope with the recent significant housing growth in the Parish, which will be worsened by the additional housing development that would result from the implementation of this site. The developer who holds the option on the site has agreed a negotiated contribution to the PC of £370000 towards the replacement pavilion.

The Parish Council has supported this land being allocated on the basis that the contribution above will be forthcoming via a 106 agreement as a condition of granting planning permission.

The Parish Council considers that this request for a financial contribution would not only be in accordance with the adopted policy for service villages in the JCS. It would also meet the planning obligations test set out in paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the need to address community needs. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF states that :

 *To provide the social, recreational, and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

 *a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship), and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;*

 *b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*

 *c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;*

 *d) ensure that established shops, facilities, and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and*

*e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.in order to promote Healthy and safe communities, planning policies need:*

If the Parish Council considers that Policy VC ST01 fails to meet these requirements by not addressing the negative impact that the resultant housing development would have on the existing community facilities in the village. It would therefore not deliver sustainable development and is unsound, unless modified to include a financial contribution to rectify this.

Yours Sincerely

Charles Bussey Vice Chairman