

# **BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL**

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HOUSING SURVEY**

### **REPORT APPENDIX**

May 2015



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**This document lists comments made by respondents to the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Neighbourhood Plan Housing Survey. Where there is a possibility of a respondent being identified, a comment has been edited.**

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### COMMENTS

- I would like to see more houses in the village. There is no enough building by the District Council.
- We need to retain the village quality of BCS.
- Generations of families should be able to afford to stay within the village. Need to support the young and elderly, which are vital to the community life of our village.
- We would like to move into a bigger house with a bigger garden as our family grows but we are unable to afford as the jump from our 3-bed newer house to a 3-bed period house with larger garden is too big financially.
- Within the next 10 years I will be looking for a smaller retirement property.
- I would like to stay in this area but would require 2-bedroom house and garden. I would like a bungalow or a garden flat. I have lived in the area for 43 years.
- When do we look to move in the next five years, we will hope to stay in the parish
- Sadly, both our children have moved away but we doubt they would be able to return to BCS to live due to property prices. In our opinion, we [already] have a residential nursing home, homes with carers and assisted housing. BCS does not have the facilities for more. We would like to see local families being helped to live in the village with a shared ownership scheme. BCS is not a place for people with no mobility and we have few suitable amenities. We would also like to see the lucky few who have council properties look after them and maintain them- it is the least they could do.
- A close network of family support is vital for all generations. Young people are unable to stay within the village due to the cost of housing and also more and more large properties are being built, taking up too much land space. We need to see families staying to help keep the school, shop, support old and young to create a good all-round community.
- We love the village but there is a lack of affordable or appropriate houses within our price range that we could move to next. We expect to need to move to a larger house (due to expanding family) in the next 1-2 years. Anything bigger than this is currently far more expensive than our current home as prices appear to have rocketed, especially in the centre of the village, so we will probably have to move to a cheaper area to afford more space.
- BCS has an abundance of properties to fill a wide variety of needs. Expanding it would lead in my view to a diminution of the very essence of its village character. With possibly 500 (?) homes and 1500 inhabitants extending it further would turn it into nothing. Transient people living here for the sake of it to the detriment of incumbents are devaluing its current village status.

- I think the village could stand the development of small detached houses or bungalows or innovative building techniques to allow working families to afford housing here.
- I require a small property with a good-sized garden but less than the one-acre I currently have. I would very much like to self-build/ renovate but this type of property is not readily available in BCS.
- I really do appreciate the need for affordable housing on a national scale. My personal... wish is that some of this need should be met by development of brownfield sites and within areas of dense population (towns and cities). I believe it is neither economic nor desirable to aim to meet housing needs by building on rural land... BCS is a thriving village with a mixture of housing stock and population. Pretty much all of the land available has already been in-filled, to the detriment of the village's rural character. Given the explosive expansion of Didcot, Harwell and the new Science Vale, and planned building around Wallingford, I feel this makes an even stronger case to try and preserve the character of villages like BCS.
- We might move out of our house if building land was available to build our own home. We do not need any more large luxury homes- we need homes for young people and families.
- There is a desperate need for smaller, affordable homes to enable young families to move in, and to support the village school and to help older people downsize. We do not need more large... houses. We already have many properties that have been extended.
- Very opposed to being told by government or local government that you must have a certain number of homes built in your area. We should be doing more to prevent family break-up, control the size of families and control immigration.
- Although we have said we are not looking to move, this is because our house has room to expand and we are considering an extension.
- Although we have equity in our house we are unable to extend our mortgage to allow the purchase of a larger home. This is because we have additional childcare costs and reduced income compared to when we took on our mortgage. Therefore, we are in a house which is too small but are unable to borrow money to extend or upsize.
- I choose to live here because it is quiet, safe and beautiful. It is close to good transport links and it is close to a larger town. Please retain the quiet, safe beauty. Please don't turn it into just another badly planned town.
- As a young professional couple lucky enough to have benefitted from an early inheritance in order to buy our first house we are disappointed that affluent, older, middle and upper class areas like BCS don't have more affordable housing for young people like us. We are very lucky but feel it shouldn't always be down to families to support their 'youngsters' first step into property ownership. We're in our mid-30s and would never have had a chance to be home owners in this area otherwise. Older, affluent owners shouldn't monopolise these lovely areas.
- As a developer I find it difficult to identify any land within the village to build new homes on. I would welcome the chance to discuss where land could be made available. We are finding that any green-field sites attract so much hostility from local residents that we are made to feel like profiteers rather than builders who want to bring the housing stock into the modern world. I find it worrying that unqualified villagers are determining future planning policy. This should be left to local planning authority officers who can make decisions for the

district, not just the parish. After all, everybody wants a home but not everybody wants new homes next door to them when it comes down to it.

- In my many years of living in the village, I have seen the proportion of what I would call 'ordinary family homes' being squeezed. Very many existing homes have been extended, some very substantially. A disproportionate number of new builds have been of the larger, executive variety. It seems clear to me that if we wish to preserve the character of the village we need to substantially redress the balance. Otherwise, we will be over-run by rich old codgers like me living in homes far too big for their needs.
- We are buying our home on Shillingford Park after years of renting. Although I am aware new housing is required I think that BCS should remain as rural in character as possible.
- We need more households in the village in order to support the school, shop, pub, church, clubs etc. Many areas of rough or un-used land could be built on. Large gardens should be allowed to be built on, if required. Any new houses must have off-street parking. Usable cycle paths must be built to Wallingford and Didcot.

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- I consider that there is enough housing development planned in the surrounding area- Didcot, Wallingford etc. There is no work available in BCS and so I do not see any need for so-called affordable housing. [It would be] far better for [affordable housing] to be near possible employment.
- My two children would like to come back to BCS to live as they were both born here. They would like to build their own home.
- BCS is one of the most expensive areas in Oxfordshire in one of the most expensive shires. There are virtually zero employment opportunities in the village. Both Didcot and Wallingford offer more employment and cheaper housing options (as well as better facilities and more schools). It makes sense that people live there.
- It is evident that many incomers buy a modest-sized property, only to apply for permission to extend significantly, leaving a dearth of small starter/ pensioner-sized houses.
- There is a lack of properties for older people in BCS who want to downsize. They usually need a small garden and perhaps a bungalow or small house.
- It is not understood why such questionnaires are helpful, other than to fill in a book of statistics to be interpreted by users in any way that suits them. Why are they regarded with quite so much reverence in this place?
- I think these houses should only apply for people living in the parish already, or with strong connections to the parish.
- Affordable housing could be provided... . Not realistic for young people to expect to live where they have necessarily grown up. BCS not set up for the elderly so probably best for them in Wallingford.
- I think we need more affordable housing and houses to rent. We do not need any more large homes.

- Given BCS proximity to Wallingford and consented developments there is a reduced need to accommodate many in the village. Whatever goes forward must use best design principles.
- We are moving out of the area so we can be closer to family- no other reason! We love it round here so would stay if our family lived closer.
- Too many large, expensive detached houses have been built in BCS in recent years. A greater number of smaller houses is needed to maintain a balanced population to bring younger people and as a result bring support to school, for example. Variety brings more interest to a village.
- I want to build my own home on my own land and live back in the place where I grew up.
- We wish to preserve the charming nature of this village with minimal development. There will be plenty of more affordable housing very close by (the new development planned for Wallingford) as well as a few miles away in Didcot. Any significant developments in BCS would encourage us to move away to another village.
- BCS seems to insinuate itself into anyone who has lived here. Friendship, lots of groups with similar interests, and a thriving community with a huge variety of clubs available to everyone, a willingness to accept new ideas- what more could you want?
- Much as BCS is a lovely place to live I feel that there is virtually no opportunity for my children to have a home of their own in the village. I worry that it will become closed to the younger generation.
- We need more one-bedroom properties so that young, first-time buyers can get on the property ladder- so called affordable housing at the moment is a joke!
- I would be very concerned about any future developments with the parish, especially any RES, as I feel our green spaces are very important to us and make the parish what it is. Wallingford and Didcot are already eating up enough of the countryside. I think future developments in the parish should be confined to brownfield sites and the housing should be starter homes priced in a way to make them affordable for young people who have a strong connection to the parish. Please don't ruin our village!
- There are too many big, unaffordable houses being built in the village, leaving nowhere for 'ordinary', not so well-off people to live- we need a mix of people in the village, not just the wealthy.
- We are looking to move house. However, there are significant limitations due to available housing. We are looking to move from a 3-bed semi to a 4-bed house, but the jump in price is on average £350k.
- Whatever the size of dwelling there should be 'onsite' parking incorporated to avoid the annoying practise of owner's with gardens large enough to accommodate their own vehicles.
- It is important to remember that BCS is a village, not a town or a large residential housing estate. There are many other areas which offer this. Oxfordshire needs to have varied and different places to live, keeping the villages is very important to the character of the county. It shouldn't be one big housing estate.
- The road is far too busy. People ignore this, but having a bedroom next to the High Road is just unpleasant- speeding lorries make this entire house shake. It takes, quite literally, five minutes to cross the road in the morning for school. This will only get worse as people are

hell bent on increasing the homes and therefore cars. This is a health risk for us so we will be moving.

- More than 5 years ago all 4 of our family had to leave BCS after education because no work was available in the area. Now, even if they wanted to, they could not afford property prices and travel costs.
- There is an urgent need for smaller homes in this village- as starter homes or for people downsizing. Most of our small homes and bungalows have been extended and are now large and expensive. Any new builds should be designed in such a way that they cannot be enlarged and are therefore available as small homes in the future.
- The village has become so expensive that young people cannot afford either the rents or the price of a small house. Young people are separated from their older relatives owing to a lack of affordable housing.
- Given that the parish council has committed to the Neighbourhood Plan, any affordable housing required can be done through this process rather than a RES. Elderly people in the village need to be able to downsize and so release housing stock. But they need to stay within the parish where they have a support network.
- We think that the village has enough large, executive style houses.
- With a RES development, Local Authority permission for open-market homes would be a concern with regards to the proportion. More private homes would continue to increase prices to an unaffordable level.
- We would not like to see much change in BCS. Slade End seems particularly busy these days
- Traffic problems must be addressed before housing development happens. Currently, people extend their houses using driveway space, so have to park their cars on narrow streets, blocking traffic, rubbish collection, deliveries etc.
- While not wishing to see large-scale development, there are a small number of plots that could be built on if planning regulations were relaxed without detriment to village life.
- I would only move if a small bungalow with a small garden was available. There are very few in the village and therefore difficult to come by.
- Housing Association or employment-based housing should be located closer to suitable shops and amenities such as Wallingford and Didcot- and not in outlying villages.
- BCS is only so good because of its current size and style. Changing that would spoil it. Nobody has a right to live anywhere. Do not fiddle with the market forces.
- The village needs houses that cannot be expanded beyond their existing size. This would hold prices at more realistic levels and provide opportunities for a range of people.
- We feel that the council should look closely at planning applications on large gardens. There is no consistency in decisions made.
- BCS and its environs should be kept as a distinct village entity. Any change would lead to an urban sprawl stretching from the A34 west of Didcot right through to Benson.
- The village, like many, is preserved in aspic for a privileged few. Villages were never designed to be ghettoised middle class enclaves and should be open, thriving, welcoming, mixed communities.
- Affordable housing is needed as all other types of housing already exist. There are a few sites where a small-scale build could be done and without harming the village as a whole

- Housing Association homes will be up for grabs if the Tories get in [at the next election], and Labour will probably think it's a good idea too.
- Whilst I support more affordable/ smaller housing, I would not support valuable agricultural land being used. Infill and brownfield land should be used. Prime agricultural land is precious- when gone it's gone. We need to feed the country, which is growing in population.
- We need to build more high quality 3-bed houses that fit in with the character of BCS. No building on green-space.
- We would like to see the development of courtyard developments for those wishing to downsize and therefore release their existing properties to growing properties. Even when downsizing rooms should still be of a good size
- [My point concerns] access between Shillingford and BCS. Whilst this community of homes, some 60 in number... maybe technically in the parish of BCS, the access to this village is so remote in the context of both public and private transport that to the best of my knowledge no-one partakes in village activities. Do people go to the BCS village shop? I very much doubt it. Our natural centre is Wallingford and some instances Warborough. However, I do realise that this situation has probably arisen when the county boundaries between Oxford and Berkshire were re-drawn.

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### COMMENTS

- Not directly related, but we have a real concern about how difficult it is to get out of the village on to the main road. This will only get worse as residential development takes place in Wallingford. We would like to see the speed cut from 50mph to 30.
- We would like to return to BCS but are unable to afford any houses due to high house prices. Having lived in BCS for so long it seems a shame not to be able to return but house prices are simply too high. I would love for our daughter to grow up in BCS but the chances seem unlikely. We currently live in Cholsey in a shared-ownership house... . We would like, ideally, a 3-bed in BCS but this isn't possible.

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