

Breckland LSC Topic Paper dated May 2016

Yaxham Parish is not a single Village & should not qualify as an LSC

The Breckland Local Plan Working Group (LPWG) meeting, held on 19th April 2016, was attended by Yaxham Parish Council Chairman, Peter Lowings, and Neighbourhood Plan for Yaxham (NP4Yaxham) Working Group Chairman, Maggie Oechsle, and Vice-Chairman, Ian Martin. It was clear that a number of villages had given a strong reaction against being designated as Local Service Centres (LSC) – Bawdeswell, Hockham, Saham Toney and Yaxham. In the discussion it was agreed that these villages should be reviewed in a new LSC Topic Paper. There appeared to be a willingness to consider removing these villages, including Yaxham, from the proposed LSC list.

This was very good news for Yaxham as through its emerging Neighbourhood Plan consultations had identified the wish of the many respondents that Yaxham parish should remain small and rural. It is minuted in that LPWG meeting that we requested that details about the villages should be updated. Regrettably this has not happened in the current Topic Paper. Whilst Saham Toney and others have been reviewed and updated, the information for Yaxham parish is still shown as February 2015. It is therefore even more out-of-date and factually inaccurate than in the May 2015 Topic Paper. The attached is an analysis of the Key Service Indicators as listed in the Topic Papers and highlighted what should have been recorded – correcting the misleading impression. From this, it is clear that it does not support the two main statements made in para 4.1 of the May 2016 Topic Paper as regards Yaxham:

1. “The analysis showed that... Yaxham contain the five criteria for the designation of a Local Service Centre”; and
2. “The majority of these villages also have a population of close to 1,000.”

Based on the attached analysis of the Key Service Indicators it is clear that Yaxham parish:

- is not a “village” (as Breckland officers have advised us through the Neighbourhood Plan process). It is spread over: the three settlements (which are 2-3km apart) of Yaxham, Clint Green and Brakefield Green; and a number of individual farmsteads.
- has in aggregate a population 772 residents (2011), which is significantly less than 1,000 residents, with some 470 in Yaxham, 235 in Clint Green and the balance in Brakefield Green and individual farmsteads.

Whilst the village of Yaxham is the larger settlement, it is not big enough and nor does it not have a primary school to be denoted as an LSC. Clint Green has the school, but no other facilities. Brakefield Green has no community facilities or access to a limited bus service. There is no Post Office (since 2008) and in July 2015 the last Pub (Yaxham Mill) has closed, as has the shop in Clint Green, further reducing the services in the parish.

Based on this analysis and Neighbourhood Plan consultation responses, we believe it is inappropriate to aggregate such dispersed and individual settlements in the parish of Yaxham for the purposes of saying that as a “village” it meets the criteria set out in Preferred Policy Direction PD03 in any meaningful way, by not having a “range of key facilities close at hand... minimising the need to travel by car...” and does not have the facilities to sustainably support significant new development, other than the organic growth seen over the last 15 years. The LSC Topic Paper needs to be updated and Yaxham removed from the proposed LSC list.

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Chairman, Yaxham Parish Council

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Chairman, NP4Yaxham

Ian Martin

Vice-Chairman, NP4Yaxham

Attachment – Analysis of Key Service Indicators – Errors, Out of Date, Incomplete

Summary Table based on PD03

Settlement	School	Shop/ Post Office	Community Facility	Employment Opportunities	Public Transport	Parish Council & NPlan View
Yaxham Settlement	No	No Post Office. Small Shop	No Pub. The Mill closed in 2015 No Garden Centre	Little or none	Limited	No With no school, it does not qualify as an LSC
Clint Green Settlement	Yes, but full, site is constrained. Governors, County, & Diocese don't support expansion	No PO shut in 2008. Shop shut in 2016	No	No	Limited	No With only a school and no other services, it does not qualify as an LSC
Brakefield Green	No	No	No	No	No	No
Yaxham Parish in aggregate	Yes, but full & no expansion	No PO. Small Shop	No Pub	Very Limited	Limited	No Aggregating three distinctly separate small settlements for the purpose of an LSC does not work

Attachment – Analysis of Key Service Indicators – Errors, Out of Date, Incomplete**Summary Table comparing Topic Paper Yaxham Information the actual position
(Detailed supporting comments are on the follow pages)**

Key Service Indicators	Information as at February 2015	Yaxham 31st May 2016	Note
Population (2001 Census)	677	-	
Population (2011 Census)	772	This not “close to 1,000” and is the aggregate for 3 settlements, all less than 500	1.
Number of houses built 2001/2014	73	-	
Number of houses currently with planning permission	7	15 months out of date, Does not include Land at back of Elm Close indicated for <45 homes or 2 other permissions, and 2 applications outstanding. Therefore 50+ new homes permitted since February 2015.	2.
Primary School	Yes -Yaxham CE VA Primary School 91 on roll	Yaxham CofE (VA) Primary School now has 100 on roll and will be at its maximum of 105 in September 2015. County projects that on its current admissions number it can absorb pupils from a further 52 new homes i.e. the number currently with permissions. The Governors, County and Diocese do not support expansion. This is a major infrastructure constraint.	3.
Primary Health Care Facilities	No	Most residents in Yaxham use Mattishall surgery which is almost at capacity and cannot expand on its current site.	4.
Employment	The village is located less than 1.5km from Dereham, which has a range of employment opportunities. There are also employment opportunities available within the village, with the IDBR showing 25 registered businesses as at 2013	There are little or no employment opportunities in Yaxham. There are a number of businesses in Yaxham, but these are primarily small farmers and sole-traders. It is the exception that employs more than 2 full-time employees. What jobs there are tend to be low-skill, low-value. Dereham is close, but the centre is 4km from Yaxham, 6km from Clint Green and 7km from Brakefield Green.	5.
Public Transport	Konectbus No.4 -Swanton Morley - Dereham -Yaxham - Norwich Hourly service to Norwich Monday to Saturday	Yes there is, but Konnect 4 last bus to Norwich is 5.16pm and the last from Norwich is 6.15pm. As for Dereham the last bus to Dereham and 6.58pm, but the	6

	Konectbus 17 -Tuesday and Friday one service Bradenham to Dereham	last one from Dereham is 5.12pm. This limited service does not support the flexible working now required or provide for any evening social life.	
Local Shopping Facilities	Yes shop and post office	No post office since 2008 Shop in Clint Green closed this year	7.
Other Facilities	Yaxham Mill Public House Yaxham Waters Café and Garden Centre	Yaxham Mill closed in July 2015, on the market since, but no interest. No Garden Centre since 2007.	8.
Water and Utilities	No known capacity issues	Anglia Water has made it clear that no surface water is to enter mains sewers. 20% of the homes are on private sewerage systems. Fast Broadband does not extend beyond the village of Yaxham, and mobile phone coverage is poor.	9.
Flood Risk	The River Tudd flows to the north of the parish, however it does not directly adjoin the village. It incorporates land in flood zones 2,3a and 3b	The River Tud is in fact the northern boundary of the parish, and yes it floods. Surface water flooding is also a major issue with repeated flooding in Cutthroat Lane, Spring Lane, Paper Street, Station Road, and at points along Norwich Road.	10.
Local Road Network	The village is accessed via the B1135 from Dereham	The B1135 is north-south, while Norwich Road is east-west.	11.
Biodiversity	There is a County Wildlife Site located on Dereham road to the north of the property known as Look East. A County Wildlife Site is located to the north of Manor Farm.	This is incomplete. There is: - a further CWS by the River Tud, east of the B1135 bridge over the River Tud; and - the ancient woodland of Yaxham Wood. In addition, Badley Moor SSSI and part of the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC abuts the northern parish boundary, and Mattishall Moor SSSI abuts the eastern parish boundary.	12.
Landscape Assessment	The Landscape Character Assessment shows that Yaxham is located on the River Blackwater Settled Tributary Farmland. Land to the south of the village is included within the Shipdham Plateau. The village is not included within the Landscape Character	This is the wrong. Yaxham is nowhere near the River Blackwater. It is part of the Upper River Tud Valley, and within the River Wensum and Tud Settled Tributary Farmland. Yaxham <u>is</u> included in the Settlement Fringe Landscape	13.

	Assessment Settlement Fringe study.	Assessment within the Old Hall Tributary Farmland.	
Status in the local Development Framework	Village classified as a rural settlement with a settlement boundary within the LDF	Yes	-
Parish Council Comments on the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation	The parish council responded stating that they supported the approach to the definition of Local Service Centre villages as set out within the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. They also stated that they supported the role	The Parish Council advised Breckland Council on 4th May 2016, that it did not now support LSC status for the village and had reversed its previous position in the light of village consultation and new information. The Parish Council wishes the village to be removed from Local Service Centre designation and remain a rural village.	14.
Recommendation	<p>Yaxham parish includes both Yaxham village and the Clint Green. The parish has a number of services and facilities required to support the designation as a Local Service Centre village. The village has both a school and public house. There is also a garden centre and cafe within the village.</p> <p>The village is located within a mile of Dereham and there is a regular bus service to both Dereham and Norwich. This provides options to access employment opportunities outside the parish.</p> <p>The parish council responded to the issues and options consultation stating that they supported the previously used classification for service centres.</p> <p>Overall it is considered that Yaxham has the appropriate level of services and facilities to support a designation as a Local Service Centre village through the Local Plan</p>		

Key Service Indicator Table Notes

1. Population

As noted in the Topic Papers the population is only 772 (2011 census). 1,000 was the previous minimum population for a village. Yaxham parish is not a village (see Breckland officer advice, March 2016 to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group). It is split across: three very separate and very different settlements Yaxham, Clint Green and Brakefield Green; and dispersed single farmsteads. The settlements are far apart (c 2-3km between them) and individually do not qualify as a larger village that has the services to sustainably support significant new development other than the sort of steady organic growth seen over the last 15 years.

2. Number of Houses Currently with Planning Permission.

The number given is 7. Failure to update this data from February 2015 suggests it may not be accurate for May 2016.

In addition, it ignores the Outline Planning Permission given to the land at the rear of Elm Close, Yaxham, where indicative plans show 30-45 homes, Breckland's Emerging Site Options Report proportionally for this part of site LP[113]005 also indicates 45. There has been an additional permission on 12th May 2016. The parish has therefore already got likely development of up to 53 new dwellings and there are currently undecided applications for another 2 dwellings. This is 15% growth without being designated as a Local Service Centre. If the figure given for 73 new dwellings for 2001-2014 is accurate then since 2001 Yaxham parish has grown in aggregate from around 290 dwellings to some 360 (up 25%) now and is likely to grow to some 415 (up 15%) in the next couple of years – concentrated primarily in Yaxham village (up 25%). This is a massive rate of growth for what is currently designated as a small rural parish with settlement boundaries. The Topic Paper as drafted therefore does not represent the true position as regards future development.

3. Primary School:

The details have not been updated from February 2015.

Yaxham Church of England (VA) Primary School currently has around 100 pupils on roll (See County submission on the emerging Local Plan dated 11th February 2016) – not the 91 shown in May 2016 and May 2015 Topic Paper.

Whilst its Planned Admissions Number (PAN) is 12, it can take up to 15 in Reception and will do so this September (having had 35 applications for places). The school will then be at its maximum capacity of 105. The site is constrained and there are no plans for any expansion as confirmed in Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan consultations with school governors, Norfolk County Council and Diocese. County believes that the current catchment area will produce on average 10 pupils in Reception each year, with an additional 2 pupils/per cohort (14 across the school) associated with 52 new dwellings which can be accommodated by the School to give an average catchment intake of 12 pa i.e. equal to the PAN. This will only be on the basis that *"This would be achievable if the additional pupils taken in through parental preference were displaced to alternative settings."* (County Local Plan submission). In other words there is no additional available capacity at the primary school, and no plans for any increase.

4. Primary Health Care

The Topic Papers are correct on this – there are no GP practices in Yaxham. The main one used by Yaxham residents is Mattishall, which is 4-5km away for most residents in Yaxham.

5. Employment

There are many small businesses in Yaxham parish, most are small farmers and sole-traders, and it is the exception that employs more than 2 full-time employees. Based on the Neighbourhood Plan consultation the primarily one-person businesses do not have any plans for taking on new employees in the next 5 years. There is therefore little or no employment opportunities within the parish, and any that are may be low-skilled or unskilled. It is therefore untrue to say in the Topic Paper that there are “employment opportunities available within the village”

The Topic Paper says there are employment opportunities in Dereham. First, for this to be included in the assessment of Yaxham as an LSC, it implies that Yaxham is to be a dormitory suburb of Dereham. As has been clearly demonstrated in the Neighbourhood Plan consultation, this is precisely what the residents consider Yaxham as not to be, and strongly believe it should not be. In any event, the Topic Paper says Yaxham is only 1.5 km from Dereham – well the edge of the settlement of Yaxham may be only 1.5 km, but from the centre of the settlement of Yaxham to the centre of Dereham is 4km and from the centre of Clint Green it is 6km, so 1.5km is disingenuous. If Saham Toney’s vicinity to Watton can be discounted then there is every reason why Yaxham’s vicinity to Dereham can likewise be discounted.

In addition, employment opportunities in Dereham are now considerably less and lower-skilled or unskilled service industry jobs than in previous years when Crane Fruehauf, Metamec, Jentique and Hobbies between them employed large numbers of skilled workers. Now employment is mainly part time in the hospitality and or retail sectors where staff are required evenings and weekends when there is no alternative but to drive as there is no public transport outside daytime hours.

In other words there are little-or-no employment opportunities in Yaxham, and what opportunities there are in Yaxham and Dereham tend to be low or no-skilled jobs. This is not the basis for significant sustainable future development in Yaxham.

6. Public Transport:

The words are the same in 2016 as in 2015.

Whilst the Topic Paper summarises the bus services, it does not reflect the full picture. Konnectbus No4: Hourly during the week with the last bus to Norwich passing through Yaxham at 17.16. The last bus from Norwich leaves at 18.15. This service is much appreciated by pensioners and school children, but does little to help shift workers at the NNUH or in Norwich or Dereham.

Konnectbus 17 is hardly relevant as one bus runs twice a week.

7. Local Shopping Facilities:

The Topic Papers words are the same in 2016 as in 2015 and are not correct.

The Post Office in Clint Green closed in 2008 some 8 years ago. In addition the shop in Clint Green is now closed and the property for sale as residential.

There is a small shop at Yaxham Waters, but this is no longer advertised as such.

8. Other Facilities:

The Topic Papers words the same in 2016 as in 2015 and are not correct.

There is no Public House as Yaxham Mill Public House closed in 2015. It has been unoccupied and for sale for almost a year. There is no indication that this will change in the near future or that it will ever re-open as a public house/restaurant.

There has been no garden centre since 2007, pre-dating Yaxham Waters.

9. Water and Utilities:

The words are the same in 2016 as in 2015.

We await the Water Cycle Report, but Anglia Water has made it clear in its response to the Neighbourhood Plan that surface water drainage from any new developments must not enter mains drainage and there must be Sustainable Drainage Schemes. Sewerage is a major concern with many private dwellings (c 20%) on private sewerage facilities, and Yaxham Waters not being allowed to develop until it is connected to the mains sewers. In addition access to fast broadband, particularly in Clint Green is a major constraint on social and economic development.

10. Flood Risk:

The Topic Papers words are the same in 2016 as in 2015 and are not correct.

The River Tud is not “to the north of the parish”. It is in fact the northern boundary of the parish. As stated it does include land in flood zones. What is not reported is the surface-water flood-risk as witnessed by the repeated flooding occurring in Cutthroat Lane, Station Road, Spring Lane, Paper Street and at points along the Norwich Road. As indicated above, Anglia Water has indicated that surface water from new developments has to be managed sustainably and not add to existing drainage issues.

11. Local Road Network

The parish is bisected north-south by the B1135 (in the Topic Papers) and east-west by the Norwich Road which serves as “rat-run” to bypass issues on the A47 (not in the Topic Papers). A major current concern of residents is the speed and volume of traffic using these two roads, without further development. Add to this the inability often to access Dereham or the A47 from the south via “Tesco’s” Roundabout and under the flyover to Tavern Lane, and road-access and experience is very poor.

12. Biodiversity

The Topic Papers omit

- a further CWS by the River Tud, east of the B1135 bridge over the River Tud;
- the ancient woodland of Yaxham Wood; and
- that the Parish abuts and enjoys Badley Moor which is a SSSI and part of the Fens SAC, and
- Mattishall Moor, an SSSI.

13. Landscape Assessment

The Topic Papers words are the same in 2016 as in 2015 and are not correct. The area is misallocated to the River Blackwater, and Yaxham is in the Fringe Landscape Assessment.

“The Landscape Character Assessment” Mapping, P43, shows the parish of Yaxham as including part of “A5: Upper Tud River Valley”, “B6: River Wensum and Tud Tributary Farmland” and “E5: Central Breckland Plateau”. What it is not is anywhere near the River Blackwater, which is to the north and west of Dereham and not to the south east of Dereham

as Yaxham is.

“The Landscape Character Assessment” says:

- “B6: Wensum & Tud Settled Tributary Farmland
B6.1 Key Characteristics” include
 - “Fields are characteristically medium to large in size, although small-scale fields adjoin the drains and tributaries e.g. surrounding **Yaxham** at the head of the River Tud.” P.155
 - “Tributaries of the River Tud and Wensum cross the arable landscape creating small scale, ecologically diverse features e.g. wet meadow, wet woodland, and marshland a number of which are designated as County Wildlife Sites.” P.155
 - “Settlement pattern is characterised by frequent dispersed farmsteads and hamlets and larger villages clustered around the rural road network in both a linear (**Clint Green [Yaxham]**) and nucleated (Gressenhall) settlement pattern.” P156
 - “Distinctive vernacular building materials include Norfolk red brick and clay lump at **Yaxham.**” P156
- “B6.4 Although fields are characteristically medium to large in scale, localised areas of small-scale fields adjoin the tributaries, these fields being separated by drainage channels to drain the wetter soils e.g. surrounding **Yaxham**... A patchwork effects is created by the tributaries and associated small fields draining into the Upper Tud, to the east of Dereham.” P.156
- “E5.5 A number of small blocks of ancient woodland survive within the character area e.g. at **Yaxham Wood**...” P.156
- “Character Area B5 (B6): River Wensum and Tud Tributary Farmland...
Very flat land at **Yaxham**-small scale drainage pattern.
Vernacular building materials- Norfolk red brick, clay lump-both found at **Yaxham**”
Appendix 2, P.19

“**Settlement Fringe Landscape Assessment**”, July 2007, (there is no such thing as “the Landscape Character Assessment Settlement Fringe study”). This includes **Yaxham** in: “DE4: Old Hall Tributary Farmland:”

- “Natural: Principal natural elements include the mixed native hedgerows which form the field boundaries and the remaining mature hedgerow trees.
- A smaller scale network of mixed agricultural fields, including grazing and rush pasture, persists in the around **Yaxham**. Shelterbelt and coniferous vegetation is also apparent to the Whinburgh Road, adjacent to the Mid Norfolk Railway Line.
- Landform throughout the character area is that of a series of tributary valleys.
- These vegetation elements indicate the historic/post enclosure land cover pattern. They would take significant time to replace if lost and are therefore considered sensitive to change.” P.94.

14. Parish Council Comments

The May 2016 Topic Paper is wrong and out of date.

Yaxham Parish Council advised Breckland Council Members and Officers on 4th May 2016, dated 29th April 2016, that it did not now support LSC status for the village and had reversed its previous position in the light of village consultation and new information. “This letter is to record and confirm that Yaxham Parish Council wishes the village to be removed from Local Service Centre designation and remain a rural village.”

It is therefore wrong to repeat the words from the May 2015 Topic Paper.