

# Rivenhall Parish Council

*SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF RIVENHALL AND RIVENHALL END IN THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT  
IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX*

## **CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL**

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3 February 2016

Our Ref: F1/B2

Mrs. Carolyn Johnson  
Planning Technician  
Sustainable Development  
Causeway House  
Braintree  
CM7 9HB

Dear Mrs. Johnson,

### **Braintree District Local Plan - Rivenhall Parish.**

Thank you for the letter of 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015 inviting the Parish Council to comment on the new Local Plan - to include both its position regarding previous comments submitted during the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan in 2012 and on the additional sites put forward during the Call for Sites by landowners, which you have listed (though please note that you omitted site RIVE 521 in the list).

Prior to deciding on its position, the Parish Council invited all residents in the parish, by way of a letter, to a forum which was held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 prior to the January Parish Council meeting. This was well attended with 54 Rivenhall residents present. They were able to view all the proposed sites and related background material on display boards. The Parish Council would like to thank BDC for providing some of the large coloured maps that were used.

Written comments from residents on feedback sheets were invited and these are summarised as attached.

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Having drawn up a draft Parish Council response, this was also subject to a further opportunity for public comment prior to the next monthly Parish Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016. At this meeting the Parish Council also reconsidered the views it had submitted to BDC in 2012.

The Parish Council would request that BDC places some weight on the efforts that the Parish Council has gone to in order to represent the views of the local community in an evidenced way.

Yours sincerely,

Keith P. Taylor  
Clerk to the Council.

**Rivenhall Parish Council Views in 2012 as presented to the BDC Local Plan Sub-Committee 24<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

Current position following reconsideration added *in italics*

**Rivenhall**

- Support allocation of visually important space on western side of Oak Road. *Continued support.*
- Support allocation of the primary school as educational use. *Continued support.*
- Support allocation of playing field as open space (currently outside of village envelope). *Continued support.*
- Support an employment boundary around the former Polish campsite (but should be drawn tight to existing buildings and with need to reduce environmental impacts including growing use of bright lighting in countryside location). *Continued support.*
- Do not support an allocation at Rickstones Farm. *Continued position - and see new proposed site 366a.*
- Do not support an allocation at Durwards Hall. *Change - Parish Council accepts established use for Fire and Rescue HQ but with provisos - see new proposed site 364.*
- The area of open space at St Mary's Road, currently with play equipment should be identified as informal recreation. *Continued support.*
- The garages at Tusser Close could be allocated for affordable housing. *Continued support and the Parish Council would also request consideration of additional provision for an appropriate amount of new car parking to serve the St. Mary's Road/Tusser Close estate as there is a growing problem with parking being reported by residents.*
- The Parish Council have in the past endeavoured to obtain access to the privately owned allotment site on Oak Road next to Hoo Hall Cottages but to no avail. If other land became available for allotments the PC would express an interest. *Continued support.*
- Support allocation of visually important space between the area of land north-western side of Rickstones Road between John Ray Walk and 301 Rickstones Road. *Continued support.*
- The Rickstones Academy Playing Field should be designated as 'formal recreation' (outside Witham's development boundary). *Continued support.*

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- RIV1 - Colemans and Appleford Farms quarry and leisure use - *Continued position - whilst part of this site has now been granted planning permission by Essex County Council for a quarry (Colemans Farm), the Parish Council does not support a large scale commercial afteruse and would also highlight the lack of integrated forward planning in respect of the widening of the A12, which the Government has announced will take place by 2020/2021.*
- RIV 2 - Forest Road housing site - *Change - Parish Council recognises that this site (RIVE 360 in the new Local Plan) has now been allocated and planning permission given by BDC for 370 houses.*
- Do not support RIV 3 - Burghey Brook Farm employment - *Continued position - see proposed sites RIVE 362 and 363.*
- Do not support RIV 4 - Rickstones Farm commercial to residential or live/work - *Continued position - and see new proposed site 366a.*
- Do not support RIV 5 - Parkgate Farm agricultural to residential - *Continued position and see new proposed site RIVE 521.*
- RIV 6 (deleted).
- Do not support RIV 7 - Glebe Farm residential or mixed use - *Continued position although this site does not appear in the Call for Sites list.*

### **Rivenhall End**

- Do not support extension or amendments to existing village envelope - *Continued position.*
- Do not support inclusion of car park at Fox Inn within the development boundary - *Continued position.*
- Support allocation of the open space off Foxmead - *Continued position and the Parish Council supports the provision of new open space at Rivenhall End (as listed in the Open Spaces Action Plan).*
- Support allocation of Henry Dixon Hall as community use - *Continued position.*
- Support allocation of cycle/footpath from Motts Lane at the Colemans Interchange along to the boundary with Kelvedon parish - *Continued position and the Parish Council welcomes the investment announced by Highways England to upgrade this route.*

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- There are no sites within the parish which are suitable for gypsy/traveller sites, but support allocation of 1 additional travelling show person's pitch at existing site off Braxted Road - *Continued position.*

### **Rivenhall Parish Council response to the Call for Sites to the new Local Plan**

Summary of feedback at the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 public forum:

It is clear that residents who attended do not want further large scale development within Rivenhall parish. The Forest Road development for 370 homes has now been allocated and granted planning permission. This site is wholly within Rivenhall parish and more than doubles the number of houses in the parish.

The broad objections to further development were as follows:

- Road infrastructure insufficient to cope with large developments
- Volumes of traffic to/from the A12 along Oak Road would be too great
- There is no GP surgery in Rivenhall. Lack of doctors and medical facilities generally to cope with increase in population - Silver End GP surgery not currently accepting new patients. Witham GP surgeries under pressure and some have also ceased accepting new patients
- Insufficient primary school places to cope with large scale increases in local population - Rivenhall primary at/near capacity
- Insufficient drainage to cope with all planned developments
- Loss of countryside
- Insufficient detail on affordable housing
- Risk of parish being merged with Witham
- Residents concerned that large scale developments would mean Rivenhall no longer a village
- Insufficient shops for all proposed developments
- Inappropriate development of green areas
- Impact on wildlife
- Risk of impacts on protected lane(s) - Rectory Lane and Oliver's Lane (John Ray Walk)
- Risk of flooding
- Loss of agricultural land
- Sewage system unable to cope with large scale developments
- Increase in traffic would be excessive for roads - particular concerns regarding peak time congestion in/out of Witham and Rivenhall End junctions on A12
- Loss of character of rural parish if large developments take place
- Increase in parking problems

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## Responses to specific sites (these are for both Rivenhall and Rivenhall End)

### Sites put forward for employment development

- **RIVE 364** - Kelvedon Park (off A12) - *The Parish Council accepts the now established use of this site for the Fire and Rescue HQ, but would not support intensification of use due to pressure on access onto the A12; the recent loss of most of the local bus services along the A12 (bus company refusing to use the stops), and impacts on the countryside/Blackwater Valley.*  
*This site attracted no comments at the forum probably because residents recognise it already being in use as the Fire and Rescue HQ.*
- **RIVE 362 & RIVE 363** - Burghey Brook and land adjoining off A12 - *The Parish Council continues to oppose these allocations. There have been several attempts to allocate these sites previously which BDC rejected. The bunding and planting around the northern boundary of the existing industrial site was provided as a prominent screening measure and as demarcation of the final extent of the expansion of the Witham industrial estates into the parish.*  
*Suggestions regarding the future of this land subject to any future A12 widening produced mixed responses.*  
*This site attracted comments from residents, all opposed, none in favour. The main concern was loss of identity of rural parish.*
- **RIVE 365** - Land between Burghey Brook and Rivenhall End - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a major loss of the agricultural land between the village and Witham and would have serious visual and traffic impacts on Rivenhall End.*  
*This site attracted many comments from residents, all opposed, none in favour. The main concerns were: unsuitable for any development, traffic impacts and worsening drainage problems in the area.*  
*Suggestions regarding the future of this land subject to any future A12 widening produced mixed responses.*

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### Sites put forward for residential development

- **RIVE 366 (a)** - Land off Forest Road and alongside Rectory Lane - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a major loss of the agricultural land between Witham and Rivenhall and would add to the more than doubling of the population of the parish already committed to in site RIVE 360. It would greatly add to the peak time traffic congestion and dangers at the sub-standard A12 junctions and along the roads into Witham, which BDC has already flagged up as a possible Air Quality Monitoring location due to worsening traffic related air pollution. The proposed access on to Rickstones Road is wholly unacceptable as the sight line to the left (towards Witham) is almost non-existent and Rickstones Road is narrow at this point with narrow footways. The development would greatly impact on the Protected Rectory Lane, both visually and by adding more traffic on this very quiet lane used by pedestrians. Site RIVE 360 offers very little in the way of services and facilities and the Parish Council voices strong concerns about the growing deficits of healthcare and primary school and pre-school places.*  
*This site attracted a large number of comments from residents, all opposed apart from one who supported a much smaller area for housing in the former farm yard area subject to local road junction improvements.*  
*The main concerns were: Rickstones Road access unsuitable, merger of Witham and Rivenhall, major harm to Rectory Lane as a quiet Protected Lane, lack of services and facilities, loss of agricultural land.*
- **RIVE 366 (b)** - Field off Rickstones Road opposite School Playing Field - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a further loss of the agricultural land between Witham and Rivenhall.*  
*This site attracted many comments from residents, all opposed apart from one who supported.*  
*The main concerns were: Loss of countryside, traffic.*
- **RIVE 361** - Former parkland behind Old Rectory off Forest Road - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a further loss of the land between Witham and Rivenhall. The site has high wildlife value. This site attracted comments from residents, all opposed apart from two who supported.*  
*The main concerns were: Loss of green areas between Witham and Rivenhall, not suitable for development.*
- **WITN 428** - land between Cressing road and Oliver's Lane with part in Rivenhall - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a major loss of the agricultural land between Witham and Rivenhall. There would be impacts on the ancient woodland at Tarecroft. Same comment re traffic as for RIVE 366(a)*  
*This site attracted many comments from residents, all opposed.*  
*The main concerns were: Loss of countryside and farmland, loss of village identity, not suitable for development, flooding.*

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*With regard to the adjacent and related site WITN 426, which comes up to the parish boundary, the Parish Council would not oppose this site in principle. It would be a more appropriately scaled and sustainable site than WITN 428.*

- **RIVE 367** - Land off Church Road & Oak Road between Hoo Hall land and the playing field - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a major loss of agricultural land and would have a severe impact on the valley of Rivenhall Brook. It would completely change the village character of the main part of Rivenhall. Same comment re traffic as for RIVE 366(a)*

*This site attracted a high number of comments from residents, all opposed.*

*The main concerns were: not suitable for development, flooding (nearby Rivenhall Brook known to flood), traffic, lack of healthcare and dentists etc, pressure on schools, inadequate sewage capacity, loss of wildlife, effect on village green area of the village.*

*The Parish Church together with parts of the local Primary School site are scheduled as Ancient Monuments.*

*A suggestion that a much smaller ribbon development could be allocated along Oak Road attracted 5 votes agreeing, 15 votes disagreeing.*

- **RIVE 368** - Land between the railway line and Hoo Hall land off Oak road - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a major loss of agricultural land and would have a severe impact on the valley of Rivenhall Brook. Same comment re traffic as for RIVE 366(a).*

*This site attracted a high number of comments from residents, all opposed. The main concerns were: not suitable for development, flooding (nearby Rivenhall Brook known to flood), traffic, lack of healthcare and dentists etc, pressure on schools, inadequate sewage capacity, loss of wildlife, danger re traffic near narrow railway bridge access, loss of dog walking area.*

*A suggestion that much a smaller ribbon development could be allocated along Oak Road if road improvements could be made together with a lorry turning point attracted 11 votes agreeing, 12 votes disagreeing.*

- **RIVE 369** - Land from Henry Dixon Road up to Durwards Hall between railway line and north side of A12 - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a major loss of agricultural land and would have a severe impact on the valley of Rivenhall Brook. Same comment re traffic as for RIVE 366(a) and questions about impact on any future plans re A12 widening.*

*This site attracted many comments from residents, all opposed. The main concerns were: unsuitable for housing, drainage and existing flooding problems, traffic.*

*A suggestion that part of the land may become suitable for development if A12 widening means land becomes unsuitable for arable farming attracted 8 votes agreeing, 3 votes disagreeing.*

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- **RIVE 370** - Land off Henry Dixon Road south of the A12 - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It would be a major loss of agricultural land and would impact on the valley of Rivenhall Brook. Same comment re traffic as for RIVE 366(a) and this is another site close to the line of the A12 when the widening plans are as yet unknown. This site attracted many comments from residents, all opposed. The main concerns were: unsuitable for housing, drainage and existing flooding problems, traffic. Suggestions regarding the future of this land subject to any future A12 widening produced mixed responses.*
- **RIVE 521** - Parkgate Farmyard off Parkgate road - *The Parish Council opposes this proposed new allocation. It is an unsustainable, isolated site in the countryside. This site attracted comments from residents, all opposed. The main concerns were: unsuitable for housing, traffic.*

#### **General comments - not site specific**

- Oak Road and Church Road cannot cope with traffic volume of additional homes - 17 votes
- Housing developments would destroy the green aspects and character of Rivenhall - 16 votes
- Amenities cannot cope with additional population - 15 votes
- Endangered species & environmental concerns - 12 votes
- Heavy traffic from construction unsuitable for roads - 12 votes
- Current road structure already overburdened - 11 -votes
- Village will no longer be a village if all proposed development takes place, will be a suburb of Witham - 10 votes
- Schools inadequate, doctors surgeries overloaded - 2 votes
- No plans shown for bigger schools, more doctors, shopping - 10 votes
- We are a village not a town, why ruin a community - 6 votes
- Road infrastructure insufficient - 3 votes
- Where do children go to primary school? Maxed out already - 9 votes