

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Planning Meeting held

at 7.00 pm on Wednesday, 19th April 2023 in the Village Hall

Present

Cllr David Long Chairman
Cllr Julian Mann
Cllr John Ross
Cllr Sarah Gregory
Cllr John Bailey
Cllr David Pryke

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Abram.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

Members of the Public

Jeanette Vincent Applicant
Martin Price Planning Consultant
44 members of the public were present.

The Parish Council Chairman said that the Planning Meeting will be considering three Planning Applications and that there would be an open forum for residents to express their views for each application.

DC/23/1138/OUT RED HOUSE FARM LEVINGTON IP10 0LZ

Phased development comprising 18 x No dwellings (including 6 affordables and up to 6 self-building) with garaging and parking accesses and landscaping.

(Lead Councillor for the application is Cllr Sarah Gregory)

Open Forum

Cllr David Long welcomed the Applicant Jeanette Vincent Red House Farm and Martin Price Planning Consultant to the meeting.

Martin Price said he believed it would be helpful to talk briefly about the application. This is an outline application, and the land has been allocated for development through the Local Plan for approximately 20 dwellings. The maps are just an indication of what the site might look like. The only detail included in the submission is the number of dwellings (18) and the means of access to the development; three access points in total. Any residents who would like to submit comments about the proposed development should submit them to East Suffolk Council (ESC) as it is the decision of ESC whether planning permission is granted. The Local Plan sets out a number of details. One in three properties

within the development must be affordable housing which would be available for either rent or open market discounted housing. ESC will specify what type of affordable housing. They will also ensure that 50% of those six properties will be for rent 25% will be shared ownership and 25% will be for discounted market housing. All developments of more than 10 dwellings will be subject to the need for affordable housing. ESC will investigate whether there is a need for affordable housing in Levington. A comment was made by a resident that the size of the development would mean a 20% increase in properties within the Settlement Boundary.

Density of Housing

Residents were concerned about the 18 houses which could be built in three phases. Martin Price said that the Government are keen to promote self-build houses and are happy to accept self-build properties on this site. However, it will be carefully managed and a design code will be established. Details will need to be submitted as part of the Reserved Matters application which will be subject to public comment. As far as phasing is concerned a development of 18 dwellings it is unlikely that all dwellings will be built at the same time. The applicant would like to build some of the dwellings themselves but not the affordable or the self-build. A resident commented how will 18 houses fit on the small site. He said he urged the land owner to look at the density of the rest of Levington and reconsider the number of dwellings to be built on the site. Martin Price commented that any number of dwellings less than 18 would not be acceptable to ESC because it would not make efficient use of land and would be contrary to local and Government policies. A resident commented that the houses will be very small unless they are built close together.

Access Points

Concerns were expressed about one of the access points being situated on a sharp bend and the danger of vehicles coming round the bend and being unable to slow down or stop. Martin Price stated that the access points are not definite points of access and if Suffolk County Council Highways are against the proposed access points, then alternatives will be considered. A resident stated that he believed that it is not necessary to have 3 access points. Martin Price said that site is long and has little depth and the Local Plan wants to reflect the linear development of this part of Levington. Martin Price said that in their Pre-application Submission they asked various questions about what ESC would be prepared to accept on the site. ESC do not accept individual accesses and that it would require even more removal of the hedge row. Suffolk County Council Highways have not commented but if they were to say that a footway is not necessary, we would look at retaining more of the hedge. We need to wait for Suffolk County Council Highways to reply and comment on the 3 accesses and the footway. A resident asked the width of each of the access points and whether two vehicles could pass. Martin Price said that the access points would be wide enough for two vehicles to pass and would be sufficient to accommodate a refuse lorry.

Insufficient Parking

Concerns were expressed about what appeared to be a lack of parking on the current plans. Martin Price explained that there are standards applicable to the number of parking spaces for dwellings.

Water Supply and Water Pressure

A resident mentioned the water pressure in Levington however water pressure is not a planning issue and Anglian Water has a duty to ensure that there is appropriate water provision within Levington.

Flooding and Run Off

Martin Price said that a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted to Suffolk County Council and it does not appear that flooding will be a problem. Government Guidance controls what form drainage should take. This will form part of the Reserved Matters which will also include land scaping. Planning Authorities do not normally take on additional liability in terms of maintenance of land so generally the owners of the properties pay a maintenance fee. The comment was made that the Flood Risk Assessment produced by G H Bullard and Co. states that there should not be an issue with flooding. To produce a Flood Risk Assessment, preliminary survey work has already been undertaken on the site.

Housing Types (affordable, self-build and others)

A member of the public commented that she would love to live in Levington however the price of properties prohibits this. The question was asked whether there is provision for the children in Levington. Martin Price stated that as far as affordable housing is concerned this will be written into the S106 Agreement.

“Section 106 Agreements: The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that the affordable housing is of a high quality, and that: the homes go to local people most in need of affordable housing, and the rents or prices are affordable and remain so in the future.”

The affordable element is based on the fact that it is affordable housing with rent being discounted by 20% - 25%. A resident commented that in her opinion housing associations can charge up to 70% of the market rental and this is not addressing the need of the children and grandchildren who live in this area.

Footway on Bridge Road

A resident commented that it is very dangerous to walk from Red House Farm to the Bridge. Martin Price said that we need to wait for Suffolk County Council Highways to comment on the application.

Lack of Amenities

A resident commented that Levington has no amenities and no schools. The nearest local primary school (Nacton) is already full.

Environmental Health / Natural Environment

A resident expressed concern that the headlights from vehicles leaving the site at night would shine straight into the houses in Red House Walk. Comments were made about the need for hedging and sufficient space within the development for adequate planting to retain some of the countryside character lost through this proposed development. There is a need for unobtrusive street lighting or preferably no street lighting to avoid any increase in light pollution.

Parish Council Discussions

Councillors received a written report from Cllr Sarah Gregory as follows:

Suffolk Coastal Local Plan adopted 23 September 2020

Housing

This Local Plan sets a housing requirement of 542 dwellings per annum over the period 2018 – 2036 (9,756 in total). As at 31st March 2018, 6,998 dwellings are already under construction, permitted or allocated, and, with a contingency applied to allow flexibility, the policies and allocations in this plan seek to ensure that this requirement is met. The residual need to be met is 2,758 dwellings (before a contingency is applied).

72% of the housing requirement target met by 31st March 2018

Policy SCLP5.2: Housing Development in Small Villages

Residential development will be permitted within defined Settlement Boundaries where it is:

- a) A small group of dwellings of a scale appropriate to the size, location, and character of the village; or
- b) Infill development (in accordance with Policy SCLP5.7).

Residential development will be permitted on Exception Sites adjacent or well related to defined Settlement Boundaries in accordance with Policy SCLP5.11. provision, which will serve the needs of residents within the village.

Policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character

Proposals for development should be informed by, and sympathetic to, the special qualities and features as described in the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (2018), the Settlement Sensitivity Assessment (2018), or successor and updated landscape evidence.

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate their location, scale, form, design and materials will protect and enhance:

- a) The special qualities and features of the area.
- b) The visual relationship and environment around settlements and their landscape settings.
- c) Distinctive landscape elements including but not limited to watercourses, commons, woodland trees, hedgerows and field boundaries, and their function as ecological corridors.
- d) Visually sensitive skylines, seascapes, river valleys and significant views towards key landscapes and cultural features.
- e) The growing network of green infrastructure supporting health, wellbeing and social interaction.

Development will not be permitted where it will have a significant adverse impact on rural river valleys, historic park and gardens, coastal, estuary, heathland and other very sensitive landscapes. Proposals for development will be required to secure the preservation and appropriate restoration or enhancement of natural, historic or man-made features across the plan area as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment, Settlement Sensitivity Assessment and successor landscape evidence.

Development will not be permitted where it would have a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, that cannot be adequately mitigated. Development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or within its setting, will be informed by landscape and visual impact assessment to assess and identify potential impacts and to identify suitable measures to avoid or mitigate these impacts. Planning permission for major development in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be refused other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, subject to the considerations set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Proposals should include measures that enable a scheme to be well integrated into the landscape and enhance connectivity to the surrounding green infrastructure and Public Rights of Way network. Development proposals which have the potential to impact upon the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other sensitive landscapes should be informed by landscape appraisal, landscape and visual impact assessment and landscape mitigation.

Proposals for development should protect and enhance the tranquillity and dark skies across the plan area. Exterior lighting in development should be appropriate and sensitive to protecting the intrinsic darkness of rural and tranquil estuary, heathland, and river valley landscape character.

1: Aware of Local Plan, planning policies, and site-specific allocations - site reference SCLP 12.56

2: Built Environment

- Based on continuation of linear development along Bridge Road but immediately opposite a stylish radial development from the 1950s RHW
- The village has a low-density housing; the proposal is for high density.
- The proposed development represents an 18.9% increase in the number of dwellings within the Settlement Boundary
- The self-build element of the application, if successful, would extend the development period of the site.
- The proposed development of this site would be contrary to the built environment of the village.

3: Natural Environment

- Noted proposed development site is not in AONB but a high density housing development would be immediately on the boundary. The hinterland to the AONB should have sparse developments leading away from it.
- The existing natural mixed hedgerow has been decimated by the applicant/landowner in advance of the submission of the application. This should be allowed to regrow and/or supplemented with natural species where there may have been too much damage.

- ESC (SCDC) unilaterally extended our Settlement Boundary into the countryside/natural environment. This is unwelcome by the PC. Should this application be approved in some way in the future, there should be no further expansion of our Settlement Boundary.
- This encroachment into the natural environment is not supported.

4: Highways

- The application relies on 3 separate road access points from the narrow Bridge Road. Although mention is made of these being within the 30mph limit, but only just, it omits to mention they are very close to a dangerous blind bend. The PC had previously been in contact with SCC Highways who agreed it was dangerous and painted white lines.
- We do not consider on-site parking provision is sufficient and, if this proves so, there is no alternative parking.
- Concern is expressed about additional vehicles regularly travelling in and out of the village where the roads are regularly used by pedestrians and horse riders (there are many livery business' nearby)
- It is considered that access and egress from the site is dangerous.

5. Settlement Hierarchy

- Levington is classified as a small village due to the lack of facilities and public transport which will result in additional journeys in private vehicles should there be more residents.
- Local schools are far distant and full.
- The village is fully sustainable as it is.
- It is inappropriate for such a development in this village.

6. Public Facilities

- Existing problems with mains water supply
- Existing problems with sewerage system
- Existing problems with surface water drainage
- No additional demand should be placed on these facilities.
- Anglian Water need further information before giving a response. There would need to be assurances that:

1 There is an adequate water supply.

2. Replacement of the fragile and continually failing water main.

3. Assurance that the sewerage system has sufficient capacity to cope with 40+ more people – mains and sewerage plant – The village has had continuing concerns about the latter.

6.Light Pollution

- The village has only two streetlights; one in public ownership and one in private ownership.
- No additional lighting which would create light pollution.

7.Developer Financial Contributions

- There is no clarification from the developer on what their contribution is as per Section 106 and environmental protection contribution.
- Clarity is required on how these will be spent and the clear benefit to the local environment and village.

There have been many comments from residents against the development, however the application is within the East Suffolk Building Plan. Please go to East Suffolk Planning Portal for individual comments.

Consultee comments that require attention from the developer: these include:

Archaeological Report - Investigation of the site prior to work commencing.

ESC Housing – Please note at least 40% of all dwellings should meet the building regulations M4(2) wheelchair accessible standards, both for market and affordable homes as per the former Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. These could include a range of bungalows; ground floor flats or houses as delivered to M4(2) or M4(3) as per housing need.

<http://publicaccessdocuments.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01803537.pdf>

Natural England – Advice given in line with National Planning Policy Framework

<http://publicaccessdocuments.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01804679.pdf>

Summary of S106 infrastructure requirements:

Service Requirement Capital Contribution
 CIL Education – Primary School @£18,187 per place £72,748
 CIL Sixth Form @£25,253 per place 25,253
 CIL Libraries @£216 per dwelling £3,888
 CIL Waste @£126 per dwelling £2,268
 CIL Early Years @£18,187 per place £36,374 S106 Education –
 Secondary (new) @£26,366 per place £79,098
 S106 Highways TBC
 S106 Monitoring fee (per trigger point) £476

Environmental Protection

<http://publicaccessdocuments.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01803987.pdf>
<http://publicaccessdocuments.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01804680.pdf>

Building Control

<http://publicaccessdocuments.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01803142.pdf>

East Suffolk Council are still waiting for responses from the following departments:

Waste Management
 East Suffolk Private Sector Housing

SCC Highways Department
East Suffolk Ecology
SCC Highways Department
Disability Forum
Environment Agency – Drainage Suffolk Police Design Out Crime Officer
Network Rail
SCC Cycling Officer
SCC Flooding Authority
East Suffolk Economic Development

Cllr Julian Mann commented that the Parish Council is missing key responses from various departments within Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council. In particular one of the key players Suffolk County Council Highways has not commented on the application therefore we are having to make a judgement on partial information.

Cllr John Ross said that he had several concerns including density of housing and that planners need to consider whether the application is in keeping with the rest of Levington. If the number of houses were to be significantly reduced, it would satisfy a lot of the concerns expressed. It has been indicated to us that ditches are dry for 10 months of year. This does not equate with my experience of living in Levington.

Cllr David Pryke stated that Suffolk County Council Highways and the Police have been consulted regarding the dangerous bend in Bridge Road. Within Levington there is a particular feel and characteristics of the housing; it is not high density. I feel very strongly that the illustrated layout does not indicate that 18 houses can be accommodated. I have grave concerns about the issue of parking and there does not appear to be enough space for 40 parking places as indicated. Although Martin Price has clarified it the water system might not cope there are concerns about the sewage system and the Creek. There are no places for children at the local school. Although not part of this application places in the school are materially essential when looking at the number of houses that are proposed to be built.

Cllr John Bailey said that the Parish Council should comment on the runoff and surface water issues.

Cllr John Ross proposed that the Parish Council object to the Planning Application, seconded Cllr David Pryke – all in favour. **Action:** Cllr David Pryke / Cllr Sarah Gregory / Clerk

DC/23/1370/FUL SUFFOLK YACHT HARBOUR ACCESS TO LEVINGTON MARINA STRATTON HALL IP10 OLN

Extension to Café building at Suffolk Yacht Harbour

(Lead Councillors for the applications are Cllr John Bailey and Cllr Andrew Abram)

Open Forum

No members of the public wished to comment on the application.

Parish Council Discussions

Councillors received a written report from Cllr John Bailey and Cllr Andrew Abram as follows:

In November 2020 permission was given by ESC for change of use of this building from light industrial (boating) to café (Class E) and hot food takeaway. The Parish Council supported the application.

The current application is seeking permission to extend the existing facility.

The AONB Planning Officer reports:

The site is visually well contained by existing vegetation which will provide valuable screening to the proposal. Given the small scale of the proposed extension, the siting and the choice of materials, which are considered appropriate in this location, the degree of change that will arise from this scheme will be minor. As such impacts on the natural beauty of the AONB team will be minimal.

Both Andrew and I visited the site and met with the Chairman of SYH Jonathan Dyke and the Managing Director Josh Major. The small extension will house the kitchen facilities and storage for the café allowing more space for tables and chairs in the Harbourside Café itself.

We agree with the AONB Officer's report entirely.

The proposed extension will be set back from the current building line to reduce the apparent mass of the whole building.

We have consulted with the nearest neighbours, Chris and Nicky Mayhew of Stratton Hall and they have no objection to the proposed extension.

No mention is made in this application of parking. Cars not related to SYH itself (walkers, dog walkers) tend to park on the access road to SYH, many of these using the facilities of the Harbourside Café. The first application suggested that three parking spaces would be provided on the café site, but I have seen no evidence of these being used.

Cllr Julian Mann proposed that the Parish Council support the Planning Application, seconded Cllr John Ross – all in favour. **Action:** Clerk

DC/23/1321/FUL 1 NEW COTTAGES NACTON ROAD LEVINGTON IP10 0LE

Single storey part rear/part side extension and alterations

(The Lead Councillor for the application is Cllr John Ross)

Open Forum

No members of the public wished to comment on the application.

Parish Council Discussions

Report from Cllr John Ross

I met with Ian and Helen Thompson, the applicants on the 12th April 2023. The application seeks to replace a conservatory with a built room which in their view is in keeping with what other neighbours have done.

The house already has a single storey side extension. The application will not be quite as near to the side boundary as that will have the same roof line. Due to the upstairs windowsills, the roof line will not be any higher than the present conservatory and the room will be no deeper.

The house is a semi-detached with the front garden opening on to Nacton Road. This is just at the top of the hill into the village, there is no footpath. The applicants intend to relocate their two cars to a paddock elsewhere in the village, so that materials can be stored, and builder's vehicles can park off the road. Only the delivery of materials will see obstruction to the highway and only for the duration of the delivery.

Ian has not informed neighbours at High View; nor at Broke House. Opportunity did arise to inform neighbours at 2 New Cottages. Ian does not foresee any concerns about his application, it will not affect anyone's light etc.

East Suffolk Council has identified and written to neighbours at Highview, Broke House and 2 New Cottages. I have written to each also, informing of the planning application, reference number, that it can be found online, the date of the Parish Council Planning Meeting and my contact details. I have invited each to contact me either with comment or should they wish to discuss it with me. None have.

CLlr David Pryke proposed that the Parish Council support the Planning Application, seconded Cllr Sarah Gregory – all in favour. **Action:** Clerk

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.