

Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council

East Suffolk Council
Planning Department
East Suffolk House
Station Road
Melton Woodbridge
IP12 1RT

Planning Application No: DC/23/1138/OUT

Red House Farm, Bridge Road, Levington IP10 0LZ

Dear Sirs

The Parish Council considered this application at a Planning Meeting on Wednesday 19th April attended by over 45 residents who have passed on their views not only at the meeting but also on East Suffolk Planning Portal.

The Parish Council strongly opposes this application.

The application states that all matters are reserved apart from 'access' and 'the number of dwellings to be accommodated'. Our comments and objections below are focused on the issues relevant to these two matters.

1. Built Environment

- SCLP 12.56 "The layout of the development should reflect the linear nature of the village". This accords with the narrow nature of the site. This proposal does not reflect the linear nature of the village. But in order to accommodate the 18 dwellings required by ESC, the illustrative layout involves 'back building' which ESC has previously refused in the village.
- The development needs to be in keeping with the built environment of the rest of village which is low density; this OPA is high density and contrary to the existing street scene. It should also be visually complimentary to the award-winning Red House Walk complex opposite, the appearance of which ESC protects with restrictions on extensions and modifications.
- 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.

2. Highways Issues

- In order to accommodate 18 dwellings, the application relies on 3 separate road access points on to the narrow Bridge Road. Although mention is made of these being within the 30mph limit, but only just, it omits to mention the Northern one is very close to a dangerous blind bend. The PC has

previously raised this danger with SCC Highways who agreed and painted central white lines.

- SCC Highways have so far not responded and will no doubt make same point. **We would like the opportunity to comment on any alternative proposal from SCC when received.**
- Concern is expressed about additional vehicles regularly travelling in and out of the village where there are only short footways and the roads are frequently used by pedestrians and horse riders (there are many livery business' nearby).
- The 'internal' roadways of the illustrative layout, lined with parked cars, will not accommodate a large refuse lorry nor allow it to turn round. The lorry will therefore stay on the main road resulting in the requirement for 36 bins (recycling and green), to be assembled on the proposed pathway; clearly impractical and unacceptable.
- Residents living directly opposite the proposed access points will be plagued by headlights shining in their windows as vehicles exit the development.
- Levington has only two street lights (one in private ownership) and residents do not wish to see a lit "estate" and additional light pollution.

3. Natural Environment

- The proposed development site immediately borders the AONB where a high density housing development would be inappropriate. The hinterland to the AONB should have sparse developments leading away from it.
- SCLP 12.56 "The southern and western boundaries of the site comprise existing hedgerows and trees which should be retained other than where their removal is required to provide access. Further landscaping on the eastern boundary of the site would provide a separation between the site and the farm to the east. The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies to the south and west of the site and development will therefore need to be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape".
 - The existing natural mixed hedgerow along the site has been decimated by the applicant/landowner in advance of the submission of the application (and so now described by the applicant as "poor") and little of significance will be possible with 3 access points.
 - The indicative layout shows no landscaping to the East except speculative trees in private gardens.
 - The proposed high density development immediately adjacent to the AONB will not be "sympathetic to the surrounding landscape".
- In drawing up the current Local Plan, ESC (SCDC) unilaterally extended the Settlement Boundary into the countryside/natural environment. This is unwelcome by the PC. Should this application be approved at some time, there should be no further expansion of our Settlement Boundary. This encroachment into the natural environment is not supported.

4. Village Facilities and Services

Levington is classified as a small village due to the lack of facilities including public transport (one mid-morning bus per day to Ipswich). A significant increase in journeys in private vehicles will be inevitable.

- The local primary school in the neighbouring village of Nacton is full and it has been reported that there will be no places for village children from 2024. An S106 contribution does not create immediately available additional places.
- The village water main has burst numerous times in recent years (7 in the last 11 years, 3 in the last 2) causing interruption of supply and frustrating road closures for repairs. It needs complete replacement.
- The sewerage system has blocked a number of times and the adequacy and resilience of the treatment plant near Levington Creek has been questioned.
- Surface water drainage is a continual problem through the village with frequent flooding across the road near the site. The proposed infiltration basins not only take up space but their appearance is questionable along the frontage of the development.

No additional demand should be placed on these facilities.

While these are not planning issues and involve other agencies, it is not reasonable or logical to ignore them in determining how many dwellings are appropriate for this site.

For the above reasons it is the considered view of the Parish Council that:

- The proposed access layout is unsafe, and detrimental to the neighbouring properties.
- The Local Plan “requirement” for the site to provide 18 dwellings in the context of this specific village environment is flawed and impractical. The site is physically too small, the local services inadequate and the essential utilities too undependable, to accommodate the projected increase in population. A much smaller number of dwellings needs to be agreed.

Angie Buggs
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council
28th April 2023