

10 January 2020

Mr Vincent Pearce
Senior Planning Officer
Mid Suffolk District Council
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Rd,
Ipswich, IP1 2BX

Dear Mr Pearce,

Planning application ref: DC/19/05741 Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved) - Erection of shop (Class A1) and residential development (up to 21 dwellings including affordable and self-build housing), construction of access road, driveways, parking areas and footpaths with related drainage and landscaping.

Land off Stradbroke Road Street Farm Fressingfield IP21 5PR

I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) to object the above outline planning application for the erection of up to 21 dwellings on a greenfield site on the southern edge of the village. This is a revised application DC/17/01449 for 85 dwellings with associated infrastructure which was refused in November 2018. SPS objected to the previous application due to the unsustainable location and the disproportionate scale of the development, taken together with other large scale housing schemes. The SPS welcomes the substantial reduction in the scale of development from 85 to 21 dwellings. We note the shift in the type and tenure of dwellings including no.7 affordables, no.3 low cost, no.2 self builds, provision/relocation of a shop and the road and drainage improvements to address identified constraints.

Notwithstanding the applicant's positive response to the numerous and compelling objections held by many to the previous scheme, the SPS continues to object on the following grounds.

The emerging Joint Local Plan downgrades Fressingfield from a Primary to a Hinterland Village which requires a lesser quantum of development, recognising that it is fundamentally a less sustainable location with fewer services and facilities than a Primary Village. Accordingly the evolving policy position in the emerging Local Plan shows a minimum housing requirement of 56 dwellings over the plan period.

Mid Suffolk, as of 3.09.19 (Mid Suffolk District Council Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2019/20 – 2023/24) asserts that the council can demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. Therefore, the "tilted balance" presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply and applications should be determined according to the development plan.

The Fressingfield Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) is at an advanced stage, having been through Examination and is about to go to Referendum in the coming weeks (January 2020). The FNP policy FNP1 allows for 60 dwellings across the plan period, 51 of which have already been consented. Furthermore, the FNP does not allocate this site for development. The Examiner in her report, at paragraph 53 having considered the proposed site allocations stated that *"I do not consider it necessary for inclusion of additional sites"*. In summary, the Neighbourhood Plan has been carefully considered and independently assessed. The views of the parish have been clearly made. Therefore, the policies within the plan must be given considerable weight in the consideration of this case.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the material reduction in the scale of the revised proposals and the more appropriate mix of type and tenure of dwellings which more closely reflects the local housing need, the fact remains that the site has not been identified for development through the emerging Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan and remains disproportionate, relative to the level of growth allocated and planned for in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. To permit this application would prejudice the policy making process by undermining the plan-led approach. Secondly, granting planning permission would undermine community confidence in the plan making process after successful Examination but in advance of a Referendum on that Plan.

The community, through the neighbourhood plan process, has clearly rejected this site for development whilst setting out alternative sites that are capable of contributing towards the housing need in the district. SPS acknowledges that the revised scheme has positively responded to the reasons for the previous refusal and it is a matter of planning judgement whether the public benefits of this scheme outweigh the concerns expressed through the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. However, on balance SPS considers that to approve this application would seriously undermine the neighbourhood planning process and we therefore urge that the proposals are yet again refused.

We trust that you will find these comments helpful in the consideration of this application.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Cairns RTPI IHBC
Director

Cc: Fressingfield Parish Council
Phil Butler, SPS Mid Suffolk District
David Burn, Portfolio Holder, Planning
John Castro, Chair SAFE