

# LEVINGTON & STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

## PARISH CLERK

Angie Buggs  
27 Brendon Drive  
Rushmere St Andrew  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP5 1NJ

Mob: 07770575350

Email:

clerk@levingtonparishcouncil.gov.uk



Calor Suffolk Village of the Year - 2007  
Calor Eastern Region Village of the Year 2008  
Calor England Village of the Year – 2008

16<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The Planning Inspector, Team East3, Planning Inspectorate, C/o QUADIENT, 69  
Buckingham Avenue  
Slough SL1 4PN

Dear Sirs

## **Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Appeal Under Section 78**

**Planning Appeal Consultation - AP/26/0027/REFUSE**

**Appeal Reference No 6007778**

Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council, further to the mandate provided by its constituents in its Planning Meeting dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 continue to strongly oppose the proposed development of a lorry park on the agricultural land south of the old A45.

For your convenience I have included here the Parish Council's original letter of objection and the verbatim text of the presentation made by our Chairman at the District Council Planning Committee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026. I would also refer you to the YouTube recording of the committee meeting which can be found at

<https://www.youtube.com/live/vqs3Nyb6z2U?si=r54S-aDC7igi175b>

The Planning Committee focused its objections on the following conflicts with the Local Plan:

‘For these reasons, the proposed development is contrary to the Development Plan. Whilst the need for such Lorry Parking facilities is noted, this site is the incorrect location to meet this need due to the harms identified and the resultant conflict with East Suffolk (Suffolk Coastal) Local Plan policies SCLP10.1 (Biodiversity & Geodiversity), SCLP10.3 (Environmental Quality), SCLP10.4 (Landscape Character) and SCLP10.5 (Settlement

Coalescence). Benefits accruing from the development are noted but not collectively of sufficient weight to overcome the conflict with the Development Plan.’

However, we also believe that there are additional conflicts with the Local Plan in relation to SCLP 3.3 (Settlement Boundaries), SCLP 4.2 (New Employment Development), 4.5(b) (Scale of the Enterprise) and 12.34 (Strategy for Rural Areas) which should also be considered as they were for the adjacent Eastern Structures inspector’s findings.

I have also included below further information relating to highways issues to support our objection.

**Letter to Natalie Webb, planning officer, dated 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Planning Application DC/23/2930/OUT**

The planning application which has been applied for is on countryside land and is contrary to Policy SCLP 3.3 Settlement Boundaries

“New residential, employment and town centre development will not be and is not in the Local Plan identified for development will not be permitted in the countryside except where specific policies in this Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans indicate otherwise.” There are no specific policies allowing an exception in this case. The land is “**agricultural**”.

This parcel of land is not in the Local Plan for development.

The Parish Council **strongly objects** to this application as being inappropriate, detrimental and dangerous in this location.

The Parish Council **objects** to this planning application for the following reasons:

**Coalescence**

If this planned development was to go ahead it would be adding to the joining of Felixstowe and Ipswich which is contrary to the East Suffolk Council Planning Policy SCLP 10.5 of the Local Plan.

East Suffolk Council has always stated a separation should be maintained between the urban areas of Ipswich and Felixstowe and coalescence of settlements is contrary to this statement and policy.

This area, along with its immediate neighbours, needs to be preserved to maintain the fragile remaining agricultural separate between urban sprawls of Ipswich and Felixstowe.

### **Location - Visual Intrusion**

The proposed site is on an open natural plateau with uninterrupted views in all directions. Any development would be completely out of character for this countryside environment with three immediate residents. This is contrary to SCLP 10.4 Landscape Character, Economic Development in Rural Area SCLP 4.5, and Residential Amenity SCLP 11.

The site is on the gateway to the AONB and specially protected areas. Part IV, Section 85, of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 sets out the Duty of Regard. This clearly states that it is “applicable to land outside as well as within the AONB” with “the requirement to ‘conserve and enhance’”. As the proposed development will be directly adjacent to one of the few accesses to the AONB, it will certainly not ‘conserve and enhance’ the naturalness of the area.

The current reference to scrub land is totally immaterial as it is designated agricultural land.

Any development in this locality would be out of character with the surrounding land which is countryside.

### **Noise**

There are several properties in close proximity to the land which will be adversely affected. An application such as this will be a 24-hour operation and so will undoubtedly cause a disturbance as there will be lorry movements in the early hours, reversing noise as they are shunting, coupling up to trailers with low gear changes, slamming of cab doors, voices, also any refrigerated lorries will need to keep their engines running 24/7.

It does not state the hours the café will be open.

There is also a proposed maintenance area which will be a workshop with additional noise of power tools and general mechanical noise. In practice, inevitable queuing congestion will exacerbate noise levels.

### **Light Pollution**

The proposed development will have security lightings and owing to the large area of the site these are to be mounted high upon poles not only lighting up the site but also the surrounding area causing a disturbance to local residents and the wider area. The plan does not show clearly the intended lighting in detail.

All night lighting in this flat and dark countryside will not only be an inappropriate intrusion on the landscape but a permanent imposition on the nearby properties.

Development Management Policy DM27 Lighting applies to this development.

## **Air Pollution**

There will be a large amount of air pollution caused by the lorries running engines as they manoeuvre into the bays as stated before and refrigerated lorries running 24/7. During the winter months many lorries run diesel heaters to warm the cabs and a large number of these running in a small area would cause more air pollution, alternatively some may run small generators although these may be quiet several running in a small area where it is open will be adding to the noise and emission levels.

From the café there will be cooking smells and additional pollution.

Residential houses are very nearby, and the residents should not be subjected to these pollutants. East Suffolk Planning Policy SCLP 11.2 Residential Amenity which states “all proposals should seek to ensure that they safeguard the amenity of both existing residents and future residents, both within existing buildings and from the proposed development.

## **Traffic**

The site is adjacent to a busy 60 mph road (old A45) and it is also part of the Route 51 cycle route which is regularly used by cyclists.

There are bus stops on either side of the road in close proximity to the ingress and egress of the proposed site. These bus stops are frequently used by visitors to the Marina amongst others, pedestrians have to cross this already busy road to access the east bound bus stop but with the additional lorries turning in and out it will become more dangerous for pedestrians as there is no footpath.

The proposed ingress and egress is close to a sharp bend which leads on and off the A14. The slip road for lorries to access the A14 is very short/non existent meaning lorries will be pulling out onto a fast-moving road from a standing position.

The other option is for lorries to use the old Felixstowe Road heading west and then turn right across another 60-mph road to Seven Hills junction which is an accident blackspot, before joining the A14 east bound towards the docks. With the Sizewell C development Freight Management Facility also using this route it is going to become increasingly busy.

In the past lorries, have tried using the single-track road past Moston Hall and not the Trimleys, which leads into a residential area with a large number of recently built new houses. Many of the houses on the High Road have no off-road parking so there are always cars parked on the road. In the past this has caused chaos on this narrow road with verges churned up and signs damaged.

Frequently, the A14 is closed around the Orwell Bridge through accident or incident on the bridge itself. Lorries will then attempt to exit or access the site via the single track

‘Quiet Lane’ of Stratton Hall Drift with its lack of formal passing places and its unnavigable ‘Z’ bend. There is Police and media evidence to substantiate this fact.

Although the application is for 69 lorries and 18 staff spaces it does not take into account the extra vehicles which will be making deliveries to the café, office and workshop area, and refuse collection.

## **Environment**

The proposal does not meet criteria to be supported under SCLP 4.5 Economic Development in Rural Areas of the Local Plan which states development can only be supported outside settlement boundaries, if it avoids or adequately mitigates any adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area and landscape, the AONB and its setting or the natural or historic environment.

The site is adjacent to AONB and is agricultural land not scrub land as described in the application.

Views of this site and the gateway to the AONB would be significantly changed. More importantly it is also very close to a site which nightingales use for nesting and have done so for a high number of years. Nightingale numbers have declined by 90% in the last 50 years due to loss of habitat. They are on the red list for endangered birds. In the Suffolk Wildlife letter to East Suffolk Council dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 in which they recommend a holding objection made the following comments:-

“We have read the ecological survey report (Eco-Planning UK 2023) and believe that several elements of a high standard report are missing. Therefore, the report does not adhere to CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals and is in our opinion currently not suitable to support a planning application. ...nightingales are a species of conservation concern. Upon assessing the PEA report provided by the applicant we are disappointed to see that the ecology report has no consideration for birds.

The assessment of the site does not clearly define the habitats present nor the plant species which defines those habitats. ...The PEA notes no priority habitats are present onsite. However, there appears potential for a hedgerow to be present along the north east boundary of the site which may meet the criteria for a priority habitat. Suffolk Wildlife Trust welcomes clarity on this, as the hedgerow could be impacted by proposed access to the site....”

In the biodiversity and conservation questions the applicant has answered ‘No’ to any protected and priority species on adjacent land.

The plans state that the site will be connected to the mains sewerage system that runs along the old Felixstowe Road. Clarification would be needed on this as the properties

close to this site and the road are all on septic tanks. Is there an existing mains sewerage along there?

There does not seem to be any information on the plan regarding drainage of surface water. The site sits slightly low of the road, which naturally drains on to the site. The agricultural land the other side of the railway line could be at risk of flooding through the existing culvert which runs under the line at the east end of the lowest point of the site. The site will become a large area of hardstanding and with no natural drainage, which the current agricultural land currently enjoys. The water run-off could also cause erosion or other damage to the rail embankment.

### **Archaeology**

There is a submission letter by Dr Hannah Cutler relating to known and still to be discovered archaeology in the area of this planning application. The Parish Council supports this view as being high archaeological potential.

The Levington Bronze Age Hoard (now in Ipswich Museum) was discovered in ground near this application in the 1960s. There are also Iron Age round houses next to the railway line and within yards of this proposed lorry park.

In October 2016 archaeological excavation work was undertaken as a requirement before laying underground electricity cables alongside the railway line in Levington and Stratton Hall. The project gave a transect through the parish archaeological landscape investigating prehistoric Roman and Medieval sites that have been identified through cropmarks and systematic evaluation trenching.

The Parish Council request that the applicant should be required to provide a full archaeological evaluation of the site prior to any determination of this planning application. This would allow for the preservation in situ of any sites of national importance that might be found.

### **Security**

Concerns have been raised by local businesses and residents about drivers wandering off site and onto private property as was the case when the illegal lorry park was operational from Walk Farm.

Although the application states there is a need for lorry drivers to have somewhere to park up and use amenities this is contradictory to the Port of Felixstowe 10-year Plan which states that with the £40 million improved rail terminal and work on the line to Felixstowe Port already undertaken they will hope to remove 500,000 lorries from the road. This important rail development is of national significance and was co funded by the European Union TEN-T programme.

Operation Stack has not been used for at least two years even through high winds, so the proposed amenities for lorry drivers caught up in the stack system is unnecessary. The stack area also stops before the entrance to the lorry park.

The Innocence Farm Development was turned down by Government Planning Inspector and was to be removed from the Local Plan as not needed nor was any alternative site needed.

As stated at the beginning of this letter Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council **strongly objects** to this planning application.

**Transcript of the Chairman's presentation to the Planning Committee Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

Good afternoon.

I am Chris Yeo , Chairman of Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council. We strongly object to this planning application as do a significant number of our residents.

One of the main thing we feel we need to counteract is the officer statement that despite the planning shortcomings the application would be of “substantial public benefit”.

We do not believe this is the case at all. Our understanding is that Prologic are currently based in Ferry Road, Felixstowe and they have a haulage yard close to that location. The majority of the vehicles using the application site will belong to Prologic and they are therefore only moving vehicles from a port area to an area of countryside. This is not an altruistic enterprise to support lorries in general but very much to support Prologic's own activities, with a bolt on for third party use. There is new 100 lorry site recently opened nearby in Felixstowe. So the question remains what is the “public benefit” of moving from a port location to one in the countryside.

And let us be of no doubt that this land is designated as countryside. As such it will be in breach of Local Plan 3.3 Settlement Boundaries

Approval of this application would also contradict directly with the findings of the Planning Inspectorates December 2023 report for the Eastern Structures site some 600m West of this one.[DC/21/4413/FUL]. The Planning Department have not commented on this at all in their deliberations.

The land is almost identical in outlook and the extent of the proposed development would have a similar impact on the environment. This site is on the approach to an AONB and the land is flat with wide ranging views from all points of the compass.

The Inspectorate concluded that the similar development, having particular regard to safeguarding the countryside, conflicted with the strategic aims of Local Plan Policies 3.3, 4.2, 4.5 (b) and 12.34 and failed to accord with the requirements of the Framework.

All of these findings are directly relevant to this lorry park application and need to be considered.

The application is, in our view, also contrary to Local Plan 10.5 relating to coalescence of land between Ipswich and Felixstowe and creates a precedent for similar port related activities into countryside areas.

The application included a Felixstowe Docks document called 'Future Development to Ensure We Continue to Meet Your Needs Best'. Which sets out how their rail terminal will remove 500,000 lorry movements off the roads further reducing the need for this facility and supports the Innocent Farm Inspector's view of there being no need of such further facilities in the area.

The ecology report established "limited local harm" for nesting birds and other wildlife but it has not mentioned that nightingales are active in the immediate vicinity along the woodland on both sides of Felixstowe road and the Eastern end of the site, and I have personal knowledge of them, having listened to them singing during the pre-breeding season for the last 5 years. These are a red listed species and this development will endanger their continued existence here.

I would ask therefore, that this application is rejected.

### **Further highway issues**

It should be noted that at the Planning Committee meeting the applicant confirmed that there was no booking system for the lorry park. This means that any lorries arriving after the park is full would be forced to queue on the road or park on the verges or bus stop opposite the site to establish if space would be available. If not then they may continue down the single track road to Felixstowe and via the Trimley Villages, which is not suitable for large articulated vehicles. The damage to the verges is still visible since the last time traffic was diverted along this section when the A14 was closed due to a fatal accident and would put additional pressure onto the roads through the villages.

In 2014 an illegal logistics operation was started in Walk Farm, virtually opposite the proposed site. Lorry satellite navigation, particularly for foreign vehicles tended to provide the quickest route to the location. This frequently directed lorries off the A14 at junction 57 and though the villages of Nacton and Levington. These roads are totally unsuitable for large articulated vehicles and significant damage was caused to roadside property and vehicles, and with roads being blocked by lorries which became stuck. This would undoubtedly happen again if this site were to be approved.



I would also stress the point that this site, while physically adjacent to the A14, would require lorries to make an additional 4 mile detour to actually reach the site as they will be required to approach from the Seven Hills Junction 58 and return the same way. The percentage increase in lorry traffic, as opposed to the all traffic percentage increase along the Old A45, a National Cycle route would be significant and create increased danger to cyclists.