

LEVINGTON AND STRATTON HALL PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk
27 Brendon Drive
Rushmere St Andrew
Ipswich Suffolk IP5 1NJ

9th February 2024

Marianna Hall
Planning Officer
East Suffolk Council
Station Road
Melton WOODBRIDGE IP12 1RT

Dear Marianna

DC/23/4699/OUT Land Opposite Seven Hills Roundabout Felixstowe Road Nacton
Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for a Business Park to provide floorspace for Class B2, B8 and E(g) Uses alongside ancillary uses

The Parish Council **strongly objects** to this Planning Application. The Parish Council held a public Planning Meeting on Monday, 5th February 2024.

This application concerns the outline planning application for the 22.5 hectare field designated as employment land and the adjoining 5.3 hectare field which is not so designated and remains designated as agricultural land for a high quality business park providing commercial floorspace for a variety of business and professional services and a variety of ancillary uses such as a hotel, café/restaurant, EV charging station, day nursery or gym which are anticipated to support the occupiers of the Business Park

While this application is not in Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council's area it is undoubtedly going to have an impact on the village being on the main approach road to the village and an impact on the outlook of the AONB as it is only 125m from the boundary of that area and traffic congestion which can already be burdensome.

Notwithstanding the majority of this application is designated as employment land in the East Suffolk (previously Suffolk Coastal) Local Plan, we would have had little success at the time in influencing that decision.

This proposed development also seeks to expand to an adjoining field that was not so designated, and remains designated as agricultural land. This extra land represents an increase of approximately 25% of the designated area.

Outline Plan Objections

This outline application describes a large number of premises numbering 21 which will be distinctly visible both from the A14, the A1156 and the old A45, parking facilities which tends to imply a very

large increase in traffic, particularly on the A1156 and the Seven Hills roundabout, which is already a traffic accident blackspot. The Traffic Assessments do not seem to consider the increase in traffic that will be caused due the Brightwell Lakes development in Martlesham, or the Freight Management Facility on the adjoining land to this proposed development which is predicted to have 250 lorry movements per day using the existing junction for the former A45 (Old Felixstowe Road)

This application would appear to be In breach of **SCLP4.2: New Employment Development**; in that where a need for additional employment development has been demonstrated or it can be demonstrated that there is no sequentially preferable land available adjacent to existing Employment Areas, within existing Employment Areas or within Settlement Boundaries and: a) It would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on surrounding land use; and b) 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 consultants' reports make much of the fact that the area's beauty has been much devalued by the A14 being driven across arable land. What it fails to recognise is that this outlook is still beautiful and building this development on the approaches to, and bordering with an AONB is totally out of character, would have a detrimental impact on the whole outlook of the area and is totally inappropriate for this rural setting.

The developers also play on the fact that there will already be a Freight Management Facility on the adjoining field to the East of the site. While it notes that this is a temporary facility which will be required to be returned to agricultural land, it uses this facility to give credence to this application and to give it legitimacy.

It appears to be in breach of **SCLP4.5: Economic Development in Rural Areas**; these proposals do not enable agricultural growth and diversification and other land based rural businesses.

This appears to be in breach of **SCLP10.3: Environmental Quality**; Development proposals will be expected to protect the quality of the environment and to minimise and, where possible, reduce all forms of pollution and contamination. Development proposals will be considered in relation to impacts on; a) Air quality, and the impact on receptors in Air Quality Management Areas; b) Soils and the loss of agricultural land; c) Land contamination and its effects on sensitive land uses; d) Water quality and the achievement of Water Framework Directive objectives; e) Light pollution; and f) Noise pollution. Proposals should seek to secure improvements in relation to the above where possible. The cumulative effect of development, in this regard, will be considered.

It also appears to be in breach of **SCLP10.4: Landscape Character** in terms of its significant impact on the AONB, and on dark skies. A development of this size will inevitably cause an increase in light pollution despite the best endeavours of developers, is certainly a loss of agricultural land, and will undoubtedly cause an increase in noise pollution.

Clause 10.32 relating to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in particular are national landscape designations afforded the highest protection for their landscape and scenic quality. Protection of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths relates not only to the land within this AONB, but also to its setting.

This is a major incursion on the development of the A14 corridor which as a Parish Council, and the villages we have always strongly contested and shall continue to do so. In particular, we very strongly object to their proposal to extend the development to outside the area designated for development and onto the adjoining 5.3 Hectares of agricultural lane and it would fit neatly into the

plans and fill the gap between that and the Freight Management Facility. As such it is believed that this is in breach of **SCLP10.5**: Settlement Coalescence Development of undeveloped land and intensification of developed land between settlements will only be permitted where it does not lead to the coalescence of settlements through a reduction in openness and space or the creation of urbanising effects between settlements.

Traffic

None of the traffic modelling appears to take into account the increased frequency of the closure of the Orwell River crossing due to high winds, which seems to be a more regular event as a result of climate warming, and the diversion of traffic down the A1156 from the Seven Hills Junction.

It will also impact the outlook, peace and tranquillity of the Seven Hill crematorium, which will be of particular concern for those who have loved ones interred there. The entrance to the proposed site will be very close to the entrance to the crematorium, it will also add to the traffic risk on what is a 60mph road. For this reason, traffic currently leaving the crematorium is not allowed to turn right and has to turn left and head to the Seven Hills roundabout if it wishes to continue West along the A1156 towards Ipswich. There appears to be no similar restriction proposed for traffic turning right from the site to head to the A14/A12 at Seven Hills. For similar safety reasons traffic should be directed to turn left to the Trinity roundabout before then heading east along the A1156 to the Seven Hills Junction.

There is an intention in the plan to put additional traffic light management controls at the site entrance which they describe as becoming a 'T' junction, which will also have a significant impact on traffic flows in the area. While it may have the effect of reducing the speed of traffic on that stretch of road it may also potentially cause a back up to the Seven Hills Roundabout, particularly with the increase of HGV traffic for the Freight Management Facility, deliveries to the new development, and the additional vehicles entering and leaving the site. The outline application appears to indicate that improvements to the Seven Hills junction have been approved but the Traffic Assessment only appears to confirm a commitment to consider these in relation to the Brightwell Lakes development in several years' time when 600 houses have been built there.

Conservation

The outline application details that there is evidence of Nightingales on the site. They propose that building work should be conducted during winter months with borders to support the habitat for the birds. However, there is no commentary to support whether this will be sufficient to avoid disturbance to these red listed birds and it is of concern that this development, and others along this corridor are considered at all as it is all an area of habitat for this endangered species.

As stated previously for all the above reasons the Parish Council **strongly objects** to this application. In particular, the Parish Council **strongly objects** to the extension of the plan onto agricultural land that is not designated for development in the Local Plan.

Kind regards

Angie

Angie Buggs
Clerk to Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council