

Statement to the Planning Committee – Cllr Zac Norman – Sproughton and Pinewood – 30 April 2020

Firstly, may I apologise for not being able to attend on behalf of the residents I represent, I'm afraid despite this outbreak I'm still working and therefore am very busy trying to cope with the increased demand the company I am working for now has.

Despite the reduction in housing numbers relating to the above planning applications, I do not feel that the necessary precautions have been made in relation to this application in order to make this acceptable.

I would like raise the following arguments for **REFUSAL** of the planning application mainly under the policies: Policy SP08 – Infrastructure Provision, Policy LP16 – Environmental Protection, Policy LP30 – Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport, Policy LP18 – Landscape and Policy LP01 – Hamlets and Clusters of Development in the Countryside. The fact that this proposal is not included in the upcoming Joint Local Plan and was previously rejected on heritage and flooding concerns which are certainly still there, that these applications should be **refused on the above policy grounds.**

Further clarifications of why I believe this are mentioned below:

- 1) The traffic situation in Sproughton isn't getting any better, far from this it's getting far worse and the village gridlocking at peak times is a common occurrence leading to huge difficulties getting in and out of the village. In a recent incident, where drainage works needed to be carried out on the High Street, cones were put out to stop parked cars from parking there. Just by putting cones out, it made the village come to a standstill. The culture of cutting through Sproughton must be changed so that other routes can be found, otherwise there will be serious issues surrounding our infrastructure. The Copdock Interchange being so ineffective is one of the main causes of our traffic problems and unless this is looked at (I'm glad to see this is back on the agenda) our traffic issues will never change. Babergh have also disappointed everyone in Sproughton by removing their support for an Ipswich Northern Route which would have offered some much-needed relief, this is especially disappointing considering under Policy SP08 – Infrastructure Provision of the new upcoming Joint Local Plan, it offers its support to a Northern Route under Paragraph A. Once again, Suffolk County Council is failing to offer adequate infrastructure to help villages in Babergh. With the Northern Route gone, traffic will continue to opt to come through Sproughton. If no sensible options for helping congestion comes forward, Sproughton will continue to be used as a continual rat run. By adding more development, it will exacerbate the problem further and will cause huge disruption to the village.
- 2) As well as the physical issue of traffic, pollution is another key issue. The Wild Man junction in Sproughton is one of the most polluted junctions in Babergh. There is a school bus stop for the High School children just outside of this junction, causing them to have to breathe in the toxic air. People who suffer with asthma already struggle to walk up High Street due to the heavy, toxic air caused by traffic pollution. By adding further development to the village, it will take this pollution and cause it to be so much worse, causing Sproughton residents and children to have a worse quality of life as a result. Further to this, there is a proposed development of 114 dwellings next to this very junction which, if approved, will make this problem so much worse. With no kind of solution in place to solve this problem (closing the road is not an option as this would be greatly unfair to existing residents), this violates policy

LP16 – Paragraph 2a – Pollution – of the proposed new Joint Local Plan which states, “prevent, or where not practicable, reduce all forms of possible pollution”, this is not happening in Sproughton.

- 3) The River Gipping is one of the most beautiful rivers in Suffolk. This river has been a part of our village since antiquity and has become a huge part of our village life for the river walks and views. From the River Gipping you can see across the whole valley and the river walk acts as a nature trail from Sproughton to Bramford. This proposed development would be on one of the fields directly backing onto the River Gipping. This would ruin the river walks and valley views for all in the village and visitors to the village which acts as a key walk for those in Sproughton and Bramford. As a Special Landscape Area, this should be protected from development at all costs. In the new Ipswich Borough Council local plan which has just gone out for its first consultation it states that they are going to be including a new Green Corridor Policy which was adopted in 2017 including river corridor J for the River Gipping. This would be to encourage people to walk and spend time along the river which is being ignored in this proposal.
- 4) Perhaps the most concerning thing relating to the River Gipping is the flood risk that this development poses. The field which this development is proposed to be built in is in a Flood Zone and has flooded on many occasions throughout history. With the wetter weather we have had, it has taken a very long time for the rainwater to drain through due to the heavy clay soil. This is despite what RM Floods Planning have mentioned in their email on 21 January 2020. Many residents including myself can concur with the fact that this field has flooded. Other than the obvious reduction in housing, I can't see what else is being done to address the flood risk that is posed from the river, climate change and heavy rain when, at the last committee meeting, flooding as well as heritage was a huge reason for refusal and I don't believe this has been properly assessed since the last meeting as the Flood Risk Assessment submitted on 09 December 2019 has barely touched this fact.
- 5) There are proven animal corridors across Lorraine Way which connects several woodlands and the Gipping Valley as a whole. There is no provision for either wildlife corridors or ensuring the protection of local animal species including protected species. As part of the Trees for Life scheme launched last year following approval from full council, another part of this was to produce a map of wildlife corridors and assess where others can be created to preserve existing corridors. This isn't being followed in this proposal.
- 6) The public services in Sproughton are already inadequate. We have one primary school which is already full to the brim and even children who currently live in the parish struggle to get a school place. From Suffolk County Council projections, it is expected that from a development of this size it will yield 14 aged 5-11-year-old pupils, 11 11-16 year-old students and 2 16+ year-old pupils, we have no capacity or public services available in Sproughton to accommodate this. We have no doctor's surgery, the nearest being in Pinewood or Ipswich causing further traffic on our roads which are already gridlock at peak times.
- 7) Another huge issue we face in Sproughton is with public transport. We currently have one bus service that stops 3 times a day. For the number of residents, we have in the village, this is inadequate. During a recent closure of Sproughton Road, our bus service was actually cut completely leaving residents in the village cut off unless they had a car. Further to this, the 89 bus in Bramford which many residents had relied on has since been cut, leaving Sproughton residents no viable alternative other than to either use the dreadful 111 service or drive. This is leading to residents having to drive more and more, including anyone who

moves into the village. If you do not own a car, you cannot feasibly move into Sproughton which doesn't make it an attractive village to move to, which can be seen from our most recent development in Church Lane of 30 homes which are struggling to sell. This goes directly against LP30 3a, 3b and 3c – Safe and Sustainable Active Transport of the upcoming Joint Local Plan. Also, due to the bus being cut in Bramford, more Bramford residents will need to rely on cars, adding to the traffic on our local road network, further violating LP30 – Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport and LP16 – Pollution.

- 8) Physically, this is an urban development being designed in a village, which isn't in keeping with the rural setting and has no sympathetic design. It will ruin the views along our precious valley which is a Special Landscape Area and National Character Area which needs protection along with our vibrant wildlife. This goes against LP01 2c – Hamlets and Clusters of development in the Countryside and all of LP18 – Landscape.
- 9) This proposal is harmful to local amenity and will cause light pollution from the street lighting which will ruin the natural environment of the Special Landscape Area, polluting it with artificial light. This goes against LP16 – Pollution and LP01 2c – Hamlets and Clusters of development in the Countryside and all of LP18 – Landscape.
- 10) The proposed development will harm and dampen the beauty of our listed buildings. There are 10 listed buildings which would be in sight of this development and would be directly affected. These listed buildings are historic and are assets to the community which would be under threat from this development. This is the main reason why the application was refused in the first place.
- 11) As a village we are under attack from development. We have the Wolsey Grange site which will yield 475 houses, the proposed Pigeon development yielding 114 houses, 195 homes from Cemex in Bramford and 30 houses by Bennett Homes in Church Lane etc. This is not sustainable for our little village. We cannot cope with this much development and this is all part of the creeping coalescence of Ipswich who will swallow us up along with this development, ruining what a village is designed for and will make us a slum, full to the brim with unaffordable housing which the local community is not in need of. Notwithstanding the effect on the traffic. The number of houses proposed for Sproughton is **2,310** (from the "Sites Submitted" document). This is **55%** of the housing requirement for Babergh in one parish which is simply unacceptable. This goes directly against LP01 – Hamlets and Clusters of development in the countryside, specifically Paragraph 3, which mentions "the cumulative impact of proposals will be a major consideration as development should be proportionate and context, having regard to the level of local infrastructure provision."
- 12) Approval of this planning application will set a precedent of development which will cause the Pigeon development to go ahead and will allow for development of the whole valley, a Special Landscape Area with 10 listed buildings in the line of site. As a village we feel that this will lead to the current agricultural land being developed by stealth, robbing our village status.
- 13) It has no public benefit to the village beyond clear policy requirements without any considering to the surrounding community. In order to comply with Settlement Pattern Policy (CS2) this development would have to be specially designed to fit in the area, however this is being ignored due to the visual impact of several grade 2 listed buildings, creeping covalence, no public benefit and it does not comply with "less than substantial harm". As well as not complying with the NPPF (Paragraph 196) as this will cause considerable harm to

the local environment with NO PUBLIC BENEFIT. Furthermore, this doesn't comply with NPPF (Paragraph 127) for achieving well designed places. This is because it does not function well with the context of the rest of the village, it is simply creeping coalescence of Ipswich and building by stealth. This goes against Policy CS7: Strategic Site Allocation of the current Joint Local Plan.

14) Furthermore, whilst this development did appear in the previous Joint Local Plan, this site is no longer in the upcoming Joint Local Plan and there is no allocation in Sproughton along the whole Gipping Valley which is welcomed as if development was to take place, specifically where it is stated to take place in this proposal, it would blur the lines of what is Sproughton and what is Bramford which is a huge issue in itself and is a perfect example of the creeping coalescence from Ipswich.

15) In a Housing Needs Survey conducted by Sproughton Parish Council late last year, in which almost a third of Sproughton Responded to, it has been identified that there is a Housing Need in the village of Sproughton for 12-15 homes to fill the current need. This is very interesting considering in the upcoming Joint Local Plan it recommends 1,650 homes for the village. This is a full-on onslaught of our village.

To conclude, as a District Councillor for Sproughton, I must represent my residents. The residents of Sproughton have made it clear that they are against this proposal with 289 (and counting) objections against this proposal.

To reiterate what I have said above, this proposal goes against: Policy SP08 – Infrastructure Provision, Policy LP16 – Environmental Protection, Policy LP30 – Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport, Policy LP18 – Landscape and Policy LP01 – Hamlets and Clusters of Development in the Countryside. The fact that this proposal is not included in the upcoming Joint Local Plan and was previously rejected on heritage and flooding concerns which are certainly still there, that these applications should be **rejected**.

I ask that these comments are taken with great consideration and I express my **thoughts that this application should be refused on the above policies**.

Best,

Cllr Zac Norman