



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Alex Chrusciak
Director of Planning and Building Control
Breckland District Council
Elizabeth House
Walpole Loke
Dereham
Norfolk
NR19 1EE

Thursday 28th June 2018

Dear Mr Chrusciak,

**Ref: 3PL/2017/0899/F – Application for the erection of 7 single storey dwellings and
garages/carports on Mill Lane/Green Lane, Rockland All Saints**

I am writing to express my support for Rocklands Parish Council in their opposition to the above application for the erection of 7 single storey dwellings and garages/carports on Mill Lane/Green Lane, Rockland All Saints (Ref: 3PL/2017/0899/F).

You are well aware of my deep concern about the high number of applications in this part of Norfolk – many of which are, often, highly inappropriate and unsustainable, as well as out of keeping with the identity and heritage of our largely rural area. Having been in contact with Rocklands Parish Council and the local district councillors in the All Saints and Wayland Ward, I believe that this application is unfortunately another example of such a development.

The site in question is well known locally for being an extremely wet area of land that acts as an important absorptive barrier – due to its location ‘upstream’ of properties situated at a lower level further along The Street. Indeed, during times of substantial rainfall, it has effectively intercepted considerable volumes of water that would have otherwise exacerbated the already significant flooding events that periodically affect the village centre. Three such events occurred between Christmas 2017 and June of this year, which required the use of sandbags, pumps and the intervention of the Fire Service to help control flood waters.

While I understand that the local flooding authority have now withdrawn their objections to the application (after several months of data gathering by the applicant), there remains a strong feeling in the community that the flooding measures being proposed will not be sufficient to control flood waters during heavy rainfall events. Understandably therefore, the local community harbour deep concerns about the effect that development on this piece of land could have on the pre-existing flooding problems in the village (as is reflected in the local representations). Having recently visited the village myself and been shown the location in question, I very much share those concerns.

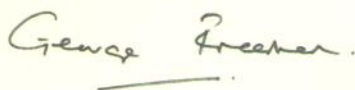
In addition to the issue of flooding, it has been highlighted to me that the proposed development would sit outside of the settlement boundary and not fit within the largely linear nature of the village. As a result, it would be at direct odds with the heritage and identity of Rocklands. Furthermore, Rocklands are actively engaged in the process of developing their own Neighbourhood Plan, and the evidence collected thus far indicates a desire within the village to keep the proposed site undeveloped. This is not to say that the community is against any sort of development – far from it. They do, however, wish to ensure that all future development in the village is sustainable and of a nature that benefits community life, particularly by providing affordable homes for young people and families (which, I also understand, this development will not).

As you know, I have consistently highlighted how vitally important it is to maintain public trust in the planning system. You will also remember that I have previously made clear my belief that the views of elected councillors, as well as the Parish Council, residents and the MP, should carry significant weight when consideration is being given to proposed developments in their areas. I firmly stand by those sentiments.

For all of these reasons, I believe this application is both inappropriate and unsustainable – clearly breaching the sustainable development criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Localism Act. I would therefore formally like to place on record my view that the Planning Committee should refuse permission for this application.

I would request that this letter is brought to the attention of the Planning Committee and read out at the Committee hearing so that full consideration can be given to the points that I have raised.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "George Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

George Freeman MP