



Planning Inspectorate
Room 3B Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Monday 22nd March 2021

Dear Inspector,

Reference: APP/L2630/W/20/3256206 – Erection of up to 150 residential dwellings on land north of Carpenters Barn, Norwich Common, Wymondham

I am writing to formally place on record my support of South Norfolk Planning Committee's decision last year to refuse approval for this application to build up to 150 residential dwellings on land north of Carpenters Barn, Norwich Common in Wymondham.

As I have frequently stated, particularly in my submissions to recent National Planning Consultations, I have strong concerns about the high volume of applications coming to our part of Norfolk – many of which are, often, highly inappropriate, unsustainable and on a scale that is out of keeping with the rural heritage and identity of our local communities.

I firmly believe that the proposals here fall foul of the first and third of those points: being highly inappropriate as a result of its location and scale, which are out of keeping with the rural heritage and identity of the local community, and surrounding area.

You will be aware that, although adjacent to the recently developed boundary to the west, the site of these proposals in fact falls outside of the town's development boundary, and would therefore encroach upon the 'strategic gap' that South Norfolk Council has agreed should be maintained between Wymondham and the nearby settlement of Hethersett (and which is formally recognised in their adopted Local Plan).

There can be no question that this development would irreversibly, and substantially, impact on the rural nature of this area. The identity of this location would be fundamentally altered forever.

Furthermore, were this appeal to be approved, it would, I fear, set a precedent that it is fine for developers to build outside of Wymondham's development boundary and on the 'strategic gap' that has been established – further damaging the rural heritage and identity of this area. It becomes much harder to oppose future applications in this rural space if previous applications have been granted despite the opposition of the local planning authorities.

I also understand that the proposals face a number of environmental questions which still have not been properly answered – namely that regarding hedgerows in and around the site. Any damage to the local environment would be another example of the rural nature of this location being harmed, and should be considered unacceptable. At the very least, a comprehensive environmental assessment must be carried out to fully understand the situation on the ground.

Constituency Office
8 Damgate Street, Wymondham, NR18 0BQ



George Freeman MP
Member of Parliament for Mid Norfolk
House of Commons, London SW1A
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I have consistently emphasised the need to ensure that public trust in the planning system is maintained. Decisions taken by the Council – on the advice of its planning officers – must be based on proper due process, rigorous and balanced assessment of all the relevant criteria, as well as careful consideration of the views of residents, locally elected councilors and the local MP.

Public trust in the planning system is at an all-time low and a decision to permit this appeal would rightly see local communities question why so much time, effort and money was invested in the creation of a Local Plan that the planning system has then ignored – in turn making them question why on earth anyone should engage with the planning system at all.

Should approval be granted at appeal, the decision would seriously undermine South Norfolk's Local Plan, and the genuine plan led system that our National Planning system enshrines – dangerously eroding the already fraught relationship that the public has with the planning system.

I would strongly urge you not to undermine that relationship with a decision to grant approval.

Yours,

George Freeman MP

Constituency Office

8 Damgate Street, Wymondham, NR18 0BQ