

Councillor Jane Storey
Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs
Suffolk County Council

Dear Ms Storey

Highways and Transport in rural areas – housing applications in Fressingfield

We understand that you have recently taken on the Cabinet brief for Highways, Transport and Rural Issues. We are writing to you about new developments and transport in our Mid Suffolk village of Fressingfield, which we think typify the challenges facing the county on all three fronts.

Mid Suffolk District Council has recently approved two Applications for 48 new houses in our small village and now has three further applications pending which would bring the total to 254. Suffolk County Council estimates all five applications will increase the number of residents by 57% including a 45% increase in primary school children. A new regional scout headquarters and a new Baptist chapel have also been approved. (subsequently a further 5 windfall houses have also been approved)

We were pleased when Suffolk County Council issued a holding objection to the three pending applications, but are perplexed to have had no response to our attached paper setting out concerns about the inadequacy of the cumulative traffic assessment (CTA) produced by the developers in response to that objection.

Indications are that Suffolk County Council officers are in discussion with developers on mitigation measures for a set of highways risks which are incomplete. These risks are derived from a CTA that complies neither with government guidance nor with the terms of the holding objection that prompted it. For example, it does not assess the needs of pedestrians, disabled people or emergency vehicles, nor the impact of traffic generated by the developments on the environment nor on the character of the village. It also uses incomplete data on past accidents as a proxy for accident risk in the future. Furthermore, given that Suffolk County Council raised road safety in its holding objection, we cannot understand why a road safety audit has not been required.

Before matters can proceed planning decision stage, answers are required to the poor process thus far, as detailed in the paper. National guidance (Manual for the Streets DTI 2007) is clear on this: *'authorities should put procedures in place that allow rational decisions to be made with the minimum of bureaucracy, and that create an audit trail that could subsequently be used as evidence in court'*. It would be irrational for Suffolk County Council to proceed to accept mitigation on an incomplete and flawed picture of the risks it is seeking to mitigate.

We do hope that as Cabinet member for Highways, Transport and Rural Issues, you will be able to progress these matters for us and look forward to hearing from you.

Written by Elizabeth Manero 13/04/18

SAFE(Supporters Against Fressingfield Expansion)

fressingfieldhousing.org

SAFE Members:

John & Pam Castro

Dawn Cavilla

John Kelsall

Elizabeth Manero

Abi Maydon

Michael Miles

Trevor Orchard

Paul Woodward