

A response to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Call for Sites 2024 from the parish of Wetherden:-

Wetherden is a small, quiet village, with minimal infrastructure. Please consider that the majority of the people residing in the village moved here for these reasons, not despite them.

Having already suffered substantial damage to the roads and current houses in the village due to the works on the A14 and the volume of traffic being diverted through the village, the thought that further weight could be placed on the infrastructure of Wetherden is a cause of great concern. With Suffolk County Council already failing to control the traffic through the village when the A14 has any form of roadworks, traffic collisions, blockages, or delays, the thought that those who reside here may suffer substantial developments at either end of the village is too harmful to believe that it could ever have a positive impact.

The proposed site at Warren Farm will negatively impact the rural aesthetic, harming the view that so many of the locals enjoy whilst taking in a scenic country walk, whilst also imposing excessive traffic, noise, and impediments to those residing on and around Park Road. Again, we do not reside in Wetherden for the extensive services available – quite the opposite. We value the quiet and peace that the village affords us, and arguably we have paid a premium to live in such an area.

The absurd proposition of further houses in the fields that immediately surround the village would result in complete chaos for the locals. Many of the roads are already unsuitable for additional traffic (particularly large commercial vehicles), and new homes would be a feature that permanently compounds this issue. Further, several of these fields flood during moderate to heavy rain, due to the high water table and heavy, clay soil in the area, and the removal of natural surfaces will increase the runoff in the area, which would subsequently risk flooding and harm to the current residents. This would result in their homes being damaged, their lives being upended, their insurance premiums being permanently increased, and in some cases homes potentially being uninsurable for the peril of flooding.

The local wildlife that so many of us enjoy would be forever damaged, and the place which we have all called home for many years, some for decades, and some for their entire lives, will be irreparably harmed. In doing so, Mid Suffolk District Council will rob us of our lifestyles, our nature and even simple joys, such as dog walks, will become journeys through a series of small estates, rather than trapes across the English Countryside that Suffolk is proudly synonymous with.

The lack of road suitability, amenities, schooling, medical and dental infrastructure will mean that those who already struggle with issues surrounding these factors of daily life will struggle evermore, whilst the cost to Mid Suffolk District Council in repairing current infrastructure and implementing new infrastructure would be disproportionately high for the number of new homes intended for Wetherden.

As such, it is an infeasible concept that Wetherden be developed from both perspectives – the cost to Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council, and the irreparable harm and suffering to those who live in Wetherden, both of which go directly against the very mission Mid Suffolk District Council have implemented, as per the Mid Suffolk District Council corporate plan. This would also undermine Suffolk County Council who have infamously introduced their plan to cut their budget substantially, whilst also negatively impacting those who have worked tirelessly to keep our quaint village as enjoyable as possible for those in and around it. There are a large number of elderly people in the village, as well as young families and people suffering with various disabilities, and the negative impact on these constituents will be particularly severe.

For these reasons, and many more that have not been listed in this response, we submit to you that at best this Call for Sites is inappropriate and impractical. At worst it shows a complete and purposeful disregard to the needs of the existing residents, and a complete lack of respect and understanding for village life in this beautiful Suffolk village. We put it to you that any attempt to develop on the sites proposed would result in a poorly executed final product that benefits neither the local residents, new or current, nor the Councils, district or county. Further, if MSDC choose to ignore the position of the people living in Wetherden now, this will demonstrate that MSDC incentives are purely commercial, as well as a complete disregard and disrespect on the part of MSDC to the needs and wishes of those living in the Wetherden community.