

Planning Statement in Support of a Planning Application for the Erection of Two Detached Properties and for the Creation of Two Passing Places

**Land Next to St John's Mead Development,
Elmswell**

June 2022



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Land Next to St John's Mead Development, Elmswell

Client: Mr and Mrs Gordon

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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction and Summary	4
2.0	Description of the Site and Surrounding Area.....	7
3.0	Description of Development	11
4.0	Planning Precedent	13
5.0	Planning Policy Assessment	14
	Principle of Development.....	14
	Support for Rural Housing	15
	Sustainable Development	16
	Highways Safety and Vehicular Access	17
	Heritage Impact	19
	Impact on Public Rights of Way	19
	Policy Conclusions.....	20
6.0	Conclusion and Planning Balance.....	22
	Appendix A – Pre-Application Feedback	24
	Appendix B – Elmswell Facilities Map	25

1.0 Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 This planning statement is written in support of a planning application for the development of two houses on land next to the St John's Mead Development in Elmswell and for the creation of two passing places on the access lane. This application has been submitted following feedback from a pre-application that was undertaken with the Mid-Suffolk District Council under reference DC/21/06709. The feedback received was positive and confirmed that the principle of houses on this site would be supported. This pre-application feedback be seen in Appendix A.
- 1.2 The application site is currently a Paddock connected to the property; Warren Mill House, where the applicants currently live. It is located next to the St John's Mead development of 240 houses in Elmswell which is currently under construction and forms part of the built environment of the village.
- 1.3 There is a short public footpath which leads from the application site to either Mill Gardens or Elmswell Road in Elmswell from where there is a pavement the entire way to the centre of Elmswell. The walk is no further to the centre of Elmswell than for many residents of the St John's Mead development. This path will easily enable residents to safely and easily access the services and facilities in Elmswell without having to rely on private vehicles. The walk from the application site to the centre of Elmswell would take roughly 15 minutes which shows that the site is very sustainably located.
- 1.4 This application is submitted with full floor plans, elevations and site plans for the proposed houses. The properties are predominantly single storey and have a low ridge height. They are designed in a rural barn style character which is subservient to Warren Mill House. The houses put forward are clad in black weatherboarding with a red clay pantile roof. These will be very discrete in the landscape and will blend into the wooded backdrop. They will appear to be low farm buildings connected to Warren Mill House, typical of the area.
- 1.5 There is a growing demand for single storey properties in the District, Suffolk Knowledge's 2019 population forecasting report¹ has predicted a 44.4% increase in residents aged 65 and over by 2040 in Suffolk and so housing appropriate for older

¹ https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Population_Suffolk_on_a_Page_2019_v1-1.pdf Accessed 12/05/2022

people, such as the bungalows, is needed. Plot 1 has a small mezzanine which has been proposed on the western section which utilises the roof space of the building. These houses will be appropriate for older residents or those with limited mobility. This was confirmed in the pre-application feedback from planning officers to be a significant social benefit.

- 1.6 The applicants, who are long term local residents having lived at Warren Mill House for over 15 years, are applying for planning consent so that they can relocate from Warren Mill House, which neighbours the site, into one of the new properties. One of the applicants has been suffering from long term illness and a purpose-built, single storey house allow them to continue to live in this area in a more manageable property and will meet their long-term needs. This will have the added advantage of making Warren Mill House, a large two storey family home available to other buyers such as families which is an aim set out in the Government White Paper “Fixing our broken housing market”.²
- 1.7 The application site is outside of the Elmswell settlement boundary as defined in the 1998 Local Plan. Local planning policies seek to avoid development outside of settlement boundaries; however, these policies have been shown to be out of date as they are not in keeping with the NPPF and therefore should not be given weight when evaluating proposals. As per Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This principle was confirmed in the pre-application feedback which was received which can be seen in Appendix A.
- 1.8 The new properties will be extremely sustainable. As well as being within easy walking distance to Elmswell which is a Key Service Centre, so the residents will not need to rely on private vehicles for their daily needs, the houses will be constructed to be highly insulated and will maximise natural light to reduce the occupant’s reliance on artificial heating and lighting. When heating is required, this will be provided using air-source heat pumps. Renewable electricity will be generated using solar panels which will be installed on the roofs. Rainwater harvesting will also be used around the properties. Both properties will be equipped with electric car charging ports in their garages.

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590464/Fixing_our_broken_housing_market_-_print_ready_version.pdf Paragraph 4.43

1.9 The development will have the following benefits:

- Provide two mostly single storey houses appropriate for older residents which there is an established need for in the district.
- Provide houses that as far as possible meet the optional requirements of Building Regulations Part M category 2.
- The development of two houses in a sustainable location within easy walking access to Elmswell, a Key Service centre.
- Create a pair of houses which are sympathetically designed in a rural barn style to respect and compliment their surroundings and Warren Mill House.
- The creation of two high-quality homes with high sustainability which are well insulated and heated using air source heat pumps. The houses will also be equipped with solar panels to provide renewable energy for future residents. Rainwater harvesting equipment will also be installed.
- The development will create a biodiversity gain across the site by the enhancement and mitigation measures put forward.
- A comprehensive scheme of landscaping which will screen the application site, compliment the character of the area and will provide additional natural habitat will be created.

2.0 Description of the Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The application site is a triangular piece of land, approximately 0.49 hectares in size adjacent to Elmswell.
- 2.2 Vehicular access to the highway is provided to the site from an access lane which connects to Elmswell Road. An aerial image of the site can be seen in Figure 2.1 below.

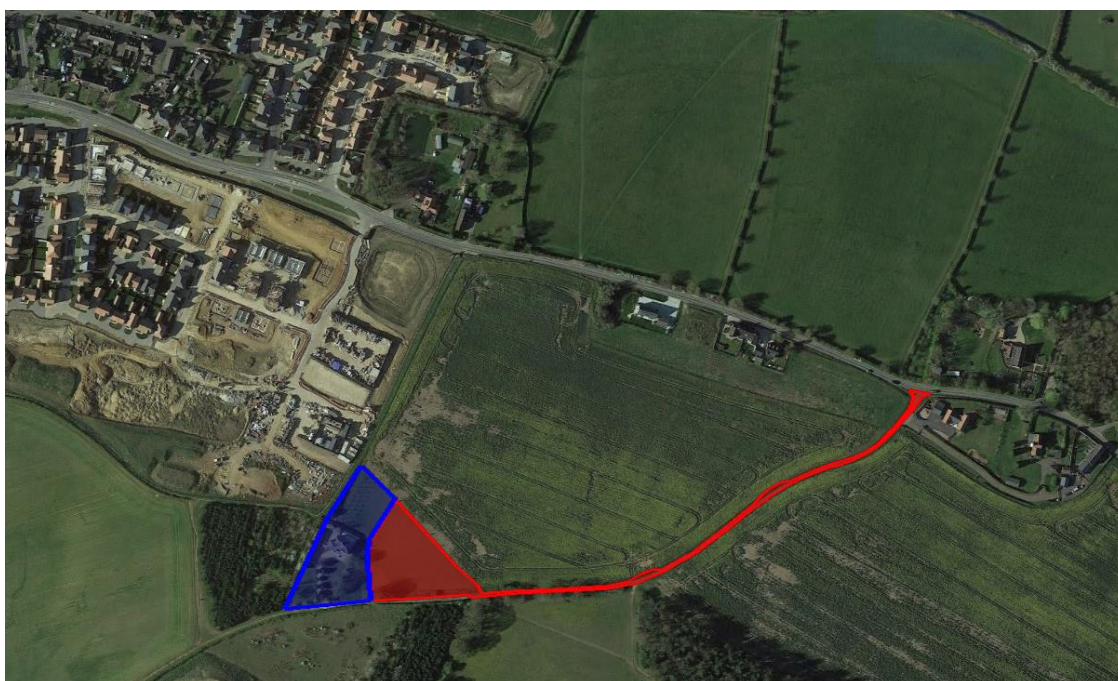


Figure 2.1 - Application Site

- 2.3 The application site has clear, well-defined boundaries. The northern boundary of the site is defined by a row of trees which separates the site from the field. To the west of the site is Warren Mill House which has a shared boundary with the St John's Mead housing development. The southern boundary is lined with an established hedge, behind which is the access lane.
- 2.4 The St John's Mead housing development is currently under construction to the west of the site and Warren Mill House. This development of 240 homes was granted outline consent under reference 4911/16 in 2016, and reserved matters consent was granted in 2018 under reference; DC/18/01679. This development has changed the character of the site visually and physically bringing it into the Elmswell built environment.
- 2.5 As shown in Figure 2.2, Warren Mill House and the application site is adjacent to the Elmswell settlement boundary in the emerging Local Plan. While the emerging settlement boundaries are being reviewed, the site's proximity to the St John's Mead

development will not change.



Figure 2.2 - Emerging Local Plan Settlement Boundary Map

2.6 There are wooded areas to the west, east and south east of the site and a tall earth bund to the south which screens a quarry beyond. These landscape features contain the application site from wider views. Warren Mill House and the large St John's Mead Development sit to the west of the site. Therefore, the site is completely screened from the west, south and east with views only coming from the north direction where there are houses positioned along Elmswell Road. Elmswell Road has a number of houses which run along its southern site which means only glimpses of the application site will be possible from the road. This is shown in figure 2.3 below.



Figure 2.3 - Site Screening Features

2.7 A public footpath runs just to the west of the site which the access lane connects to. As can be seen in Figure 2.4, this footpath connects to Mill Gardens and Elmswell Road which are both a short walk entirely using pavements and paths to the centre of Elmswell. The distance to the East of England Co-op Food Store using this route is approximately 0.8 miles and would take around 15 minutes to walk.



Figure 2.4 - Footpaths (red) around the application site (Application site outlined in orange)

2.8 Elmswell has a wide range of shops and facilities including 2 pubs; a café; a Co-op Food Store; Post Office; primary school; pre-school; police and fire station; railway station;

community hall; vet and 3 churches. A map of the local facilities has been included in Appendix B.

2.9 The application site is not subject to any planning constraints as shown in the extract from the Babergh Mid Suffolk interactive map in Figure 2.5. This confirms that the site is:

- Not within, or nearby, a Conservation Area;
- Not near to any Ancient Woodlands;
- Not near to any local nature reserves;
- Not within a Special Area of Conservation;
- Not within a Special Landscape Area;
- Not within, or nearby, any Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- The nearest listed building is over 500 metres away in the north east direction (Little London Farm, Grade II);
- Within Flood Risk Zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.
- Not subject to any TPO trees on the application site.



Figure 2.5 - Babergh Mid Suffolk Planning Constraints Map

3.0 Description of Development

- 3.1 This application proposes the development of two predominantly single storey detached properties on the site and two passing places on the access lane.
- 3.2 The pre-application advice (DC/21/06709) confirmed that single storey properties which had a low roof height would be preferable on this site as these would be more discreet and they would meet an established need for single storey properties in the District. The houses will be inconspicuous and will be subservient to Warren Mill House. The low properties will be hard to distinguish against the wooded backdrop, especially given the comprehensive planting which has been proposed to the north of the properties.
- 3.3 Plot 1 has a mezzanine area on the western side of the property which provides a bedroom positioned in the roof space of the property; this utilises this area of the building without adding any additional height.
- 3.4 The application site is approximately 0.49 hectares in size and can comfortably accommodate two properties with space for vehicle parking and generous gardens.
- 3.5 The existing access along the lane will be used by the new properties which connects to Elmswell Road. This application proposes two passing places are created along the lane to give space for vehicles to pass should two cars meet while travelling in opposite directions.
- 3.6 The properties have been designed to respect the style and character of the surrounding houses and landscape. Being a low in height, the houses do not overlook any of the newly constructed houses to the north or Warren Mill House to the east. The properties have also been arranged to ensure that their garden areas are not overlooked by the neighbouring houses. As shown on the submitted elevations, the properties are clad in black weatherboarding and have clay pantile roofs. The design will mean the houses will blend into the wooded backdrop and will not be prominent when viewed from the road. The houses will have the appearance of barns connected to Warren Mill House, which is typical of the area.
- 3.7 The properties will be very energy efficient, using high-quality building materials which will provide good levels of insulation to reduce heating requirements. The properties have been designed with large windows in the living areas which utilise natural light to minimise residents' reliance on electric lighting. Air-source heat pumps are proposed

for heating. Solar panel connections and locations have also been set out on the plans which will provide electricity which will help to run the heating system as well as a source of renewable on-site electricity. Electric car charging points are provided for each house in the garages.

- 3.8 A detailed landscaping plan is submitted with this application. This landscaping scheme has been designed to provide strong screening, especially along the northern boundary of the site. This will reduce the views which are glimpsed between the houses along Elmswell Road towards the site, and will further reduce what little impact the properties will have on the landscape. The pre-application feedback (DC/21/06709) stated that boundary landscaping would be required to support an application, this has been undertaken and it will provide the future residents with well-defined screened garden areas.

4.0 Planning Precedent

- 4.1 Planning consent has been granted for several schemes in similar locations to this application site in recent years around Elmswell. The following applications were granted permission at times when the Mid Suffolk District Council have been able to demonstrate in excess of a 5-year housing land supply and the current planning policies were applicable.
- 4.2 In January 2022 Outline Planning Permission was granted for the development of three bungalows off Grove Lane in Elmswell under reference: DC/21/05976. This application site was outside of the Elmswell settlement boundary as defined in the 1998 Local Plan and was further from the centre of Elmswell than this site and does not have as good footpath links to the village centre. The local planning policies which relate to development in the countryside were again found to be out of date and not in keeping with the NPPF, despite Mid Suffolk being able to demonstrate significantly in excess of a 5-year housing land supply. The benefits of this application were found to outweigh any adverse effects, and so permission was granted, with weight being given to the 1 storey design put forward.
- 4.3 In July 2020 permission was granted under application reference: DC/20/01999 for the development of a detached bungalow off Ashfield Road in Elmswell. This site is located outside of the settlement boundary for Elmswell, and did not have as convenient footpaths linking it to the centre of the village as the application site. The principle of this development was found to be acceptable as local planning policies relating to development in the countryside have been shown to be out of date and not in keeping with the NPPF. The proposed property was confirmed not to be isolated due to its close proximity to other houses and the benefits were found to outweigh any negative impacts, therefore consent was granted. This application was also decided during a period when the council was able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.
- 4.4 Both of the above decisions were found to be sustainable locations close to Elmswell, which could support local shops and services. The application site put forward in this application is closer to the centre of Elmswell with better walking links than the applications highlighted above.

5.0 Planning Policy Assessment

5.1 This section sets out the relevant national and local Planning Policies. National planning policy is contained in the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The local development plan comprises the Adopted Core Strategy (2008), the Core Strategy Focused Review (2012) and the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998).

5.2 The Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council has been preparing a joint local plan which had reached an advanced stage and was undergoing Regulation 22 examination, however due to issues identified regarding the spatial strategy and site selection the process has been suspended while amendments are made. Therefore, the emerging local plan will not be considered when evaluating relevant planning policy.

Principle of Development

5.3 It has been accepted that Mid Suffolk planning policies relating to the development of housing in the countryside are out of date. As a result of this, and in accordance with the NPPF, planning applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, whereby Paragraph 11 the NPPF states planning permission should be granted *'unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the framework as a whole'*. This was also confirmed in the pre-application feedback received (DC/21/06709)

5.4 The Mid Suffolk Local Plan Policies H3 and H7, as well as The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Policies CS1 and CS2, set out the settlement hierarchy for the Mid Suffolk region, and look to restrict housing in locations categorised as countryside. The application site is on the edge of the Elmswell settlement boundary and therefore falls within this category. However, these policies do not reflect the balanced approach toward sustainable development as prescribed in the NPPF. These policies conflict with Paragraphs 77 and 78 of the NPPF which supports sustainable rural housing and development which supports local need in rural areas.

5.5 The Core Strategy Focused Review (2012) Policy FC 2 (Provision and Distribution of Housing) also does not meet the requirements of paragraph 73 of the NPPF to maintain the supply and delivery of homes and is, therefore, is also out of date.

5.6 In the pre-application feedback received under reference DC/21/06709, Officers confirmed; *"Having regard to the advanced age of the Mid Suffolk settlement*

boundaries and the absence of a balanced approach as favoured by the NPPF, the statutory weight attached to the above policies is reduced as required by paragraph 219. The fact that the site is outside the settlement boundary is therefore not a determinative factor upon which the application turns.”

5.7 Appeal reference: 3194926, for housing in Woolpit on Land on East Side of Green Road, first identified these policies as being out of date and not in accordance with the NPPF. In line with this decision and subsequent appeal decisions, these policies should not be afforded weight when evaluating this proposal. This principle was applied in the decisions highlighted in Section 4 of this report. These decisions confirm that as the Mid Suffolk Local Plan is not in accordance with the NPPF, Paragraph 11 should be engaged when deciding applications outside of settlement boundaries, and these should be decided by assessing the planning balance of the applications.

5.8 The Mid Suffolk Council currently has in excess of a 5-year housing land supply, however, as the feedback received from pre-application DC/21/06709 confirmed; *“even though the District can demonstrate in excess of the required housing land supply, this cannot be read as a cap on development”*.

5.9 The lack of conformity of key local planning policies with the NPPF on the supply of housing land means that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against Policies in the NPPF.

Support for Rural Housing

5.10 National Policy recognises the need for sustainable levels of housing growth in rural communities and states that all settlements have a role in providing rural housing. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF and Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 67-009-20190722 of the NPPG confirms; *‘a wide range of settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas’*.

5.11 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF confirms the importance of rural housing as essential to ensure viable use of facilities. Paragraph 78 states that Planning Policies should *‘identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.’* This is particularly relevant to this application, as whilst the site falls within Wetherden Parish, the application site is within easy

walking distance to the village of Elmswell.

- 5.12 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided. The application site cannot be considered isolated as it is adjacent to Elmswell, an existing house and to a development of 240 homes. Given the site's position next to this large development, the site cannot be considered as isolated. The meaning of 'isolated' was clarified following a Court of Appeal case Braintree District Council, against the Secretary of State, Greyread Ltd and Granville Developments dated 28th March 2018, Case No: C1/2017/3292. (This case dealt with the predecessor to paragraph 79, paragraph 55 of the 2012 edition of the NPPF). This case concluded that isolated should be defined as, "*far away from other places, buildings or people; remote*". This Court of Appeal case supports the principle of development in this planning application as it is close to existing housing.

Sustainable Development

- 5.13 The NPPF sets out the three dimensions of sustainable development in Paragraph 8. In the context of this scheme, these are assessed as follows:
- 5.14 Social: The pre-application submitted prior to this application (DC/21/06709) confirmed that the delivery of new housing is a social benefit.
- 5.15 The properties proposed are predominantly single storey making them appropriate for the elderly or residents with disabilities. The properties have been designed as far as possible to meet the optional requirements of Building Regulations Part M category 2. This will help to address an established housing need within the District which was confirmed to be a further social benefit in pre-application feedback DC/21/06709. While plot 1 has a small mezzanine section, this could be used as a guest bedroom as there are three further bedrooms on the ground floor, two of which have en-suite bathrooms.
- 5.16 There are very good pedestrian connections from the site to the St John's Mead development and to the existing right of way network. These links will allow future residents to access the facilities provided in Elmswell has wide a range of shops and facilities such as a school, butcher; Post Office; Co-Op Food Store; vets, churches; pubs, a cafe and takeaways. Elmswell can provide future residents with all of their immediate needs by safe walking routes. Elmswell also has a mainline railway station which has regular direct trains to Ipswich, Cambridge and Peterborough.

- 5.17 The social sustainability of the site was acknowledged in pre-application DC/21/06709 and it was confirmed that this would confer benefit to the application.
- 5.18 Environmental: Pre-application DC/21/06709 confirmed that an application would need to; *“consider the environmental aspect of any application both how it is screened and how it impacts on biodiversity net gain”*. A comprehensive landscaping plan and tree survey has been submitted with this application which proposes a thorough scheme of landscaping on the northern boundary of the site and around the new properties. The TPO trees to the south of the site along the access lane will be protected during the construction phases. This native planting will benefit the wider landscape.
- 5.19 An ecology report has also been submitted with this application. This has suggested mitigation and enhancement measures for the site which will be implemented and will result in a biodiversity net gain across the site.
- 5.20 As stated in Section 3, the houses will be constructed using high quality, environmentally friendly building materials, resulting in a high level of insulation and using energy efficient air source heat pumps for heating. Rainwater harvesting and solar panel connections have also been implemented into the design providing further environmental benefit.
- 5.21 Economic: The construction of these two properties will be undertaken by a local builder using locally sourced materials which will benefit the local economy.
- 5.22 The addition of two new homes to the area will also help to support the local shops, facilities and retailers.
- 5.23 These benefits meet the three strands of sustainable development and should be considered acceptable.

Highways Safety and Vehicular Access

- 5.24 Mid Suffolk Local Plan Saved Policy T10 requires that development has regard for the provision of safe access to and from the development site, the suitability of existing roads giving access to the site, the traffic generated by the development, parking and turning and whether the needs of cyclists and pedestrians have been met.
- 5.25 Figure 5.1 below is an extract from the Crashmap record. As can be seen, there have been no reported accidents where the access lane meets Elmswell Road near the site in the past 10 years.

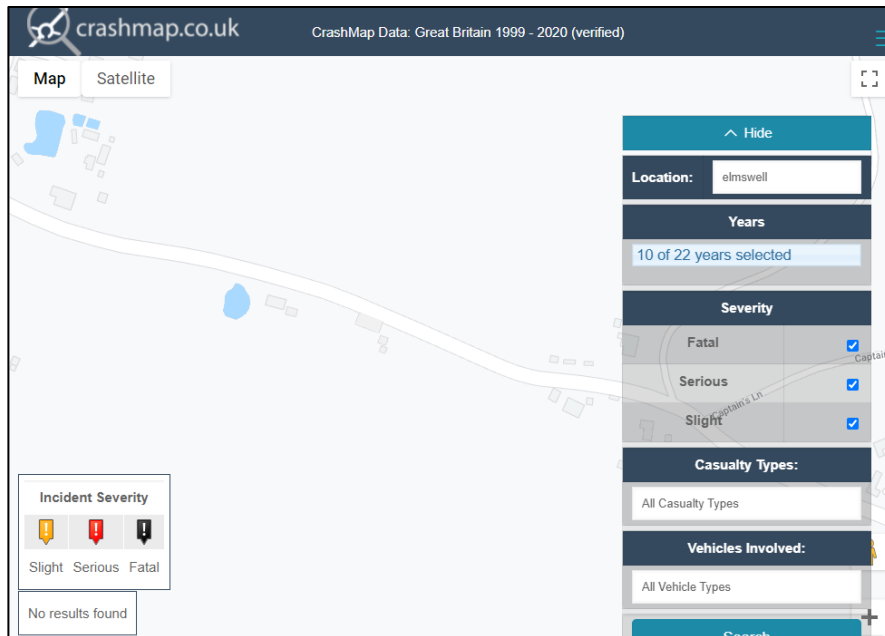


Figure 5.1 - Crashmap Record

- 5.26 The proposed development will only create a small increase in vehicle traffic which will not have an impact on the public highway.
- 5.27 The access lane has good visibility onto Elmswell Road and can provide safe access for future residents
- 5.28 This application proposes two passing places along the access lane which leads to the site to ensure that access can be safely provided and that cars travelling in opposite directions can pass one another. The passing places proposed have been located at either side of the access lane with a maximum of 125 metres apart, which is below the suggested spacing of 200 metres required by document – HS2 Rural Road Design Criteria for a single-track road. The passing place will be constructed as per the Suffolk County Council Plan DM06 as submitted with this application and as shown on the location plan.
- 5.29 Each house has been laid out with the required parking spaces as set out in the Suffolk County Highways requirements document. Plot 1 which is 4 bedrooms has been set out with 3 car parking spaces, while Plot 2 has 2 car parking spaces, as well as turning areas which meet the requirements of Suffolk County Council Highway. Electric charging points will also be provided in the garages, which also provide space for two cycles to be securely stored.
- 5.30 The application site is a short cycle ride to the villages of Wetherden, Elmswell and

Woolpit, and there are good walking links to the village of Elmswell.

Heritage Impact

5.31 Mid Suffolk Local (1998) Plan Policy HB1 states that the planning authority will place a high priority on protecting the character and appearance of all buildings of architectural or historic interest.

5.32 As previously identified, there are no listed buildings in the vicinity of the application site. The closest listed building is Little London Farmhouse which is 500 metres from the pre-application site. As can be seen in the map in Figure 5.2 below, there is a significant distance between the application site and this listed building which means there will be no impact on their setting. The very large new build development positioned to the north of the pre-application site also creates a heavily developed backdrop to the pre-application site when viewed from the direction of these listed buildings, which further reduces the impact.

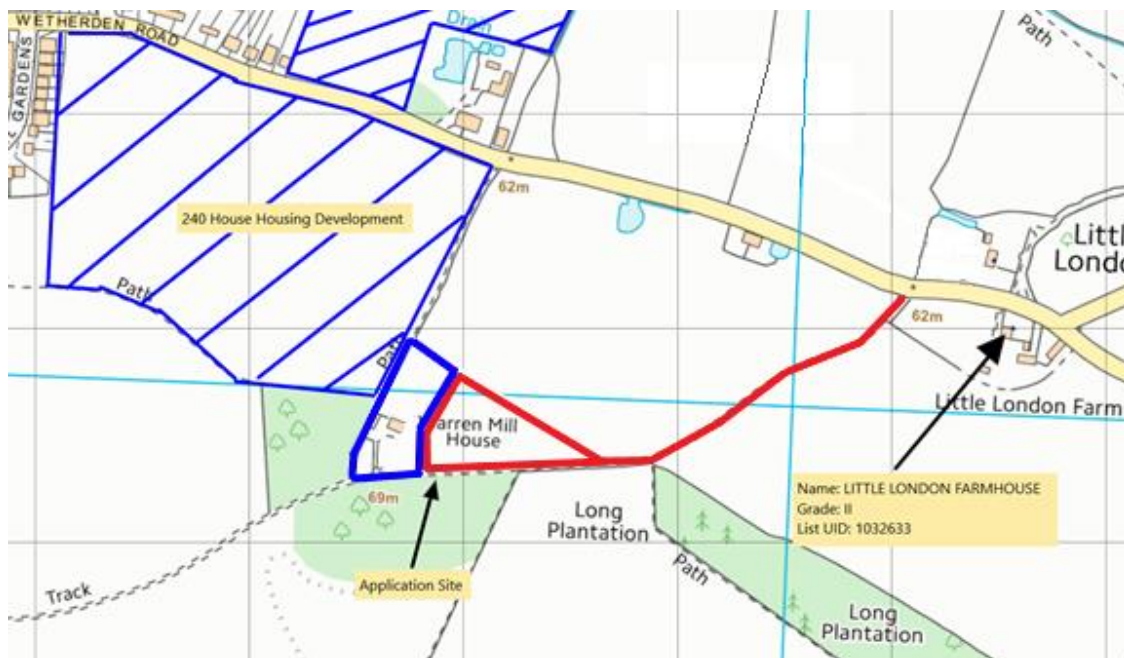


Figure 5.2 - Listed Buildings Near to the Pre-Application Site

Impact on Public Rights of Way

5.33 Mid Suffolk Local Plan Policy RT12 seeks to safeguard the footpath and bridleway network. As stated earlier in this report, there is a footpath which runs across the northern boundary of the site. This can be seen in Figure 5.2. above.

5.34 Development of this site will protect this footpath. There is sufficient space within the site that there will be no need to close the footpath at any time. The footpath is located

beyond the north western boundary of the site, so there will be no impact on the footpath be the development of the site.

- 5.35 The footpath is considered a benefit of the site's location and access to it will be conveniently available to the future residents.

Policy Conclusions

- 5.36 This report considers that the site is in a sustainable location situated in easy walking distance to Elmswell. The proposal contributes to the three dimensions of sustainable development as set out in The Framework:

Economic

- Employment from the construction phase;
- Increased trade for local business; and
- Support of local services and facilities by way of patronage.

Social

- Provision of two predominantly single storey houses, contributing to the housing stock of the district and providing homes for older people or those with limited mobility that are in local need;
- Houses designed to comply as far as possible with building regulations Part M Category 2.
- Maintaining the character of the surrounding area and residential amenity; and
- Support of local services and facilities by way of patronage.

Environmental

- Within easy walking distance of the facilities in Elmswell, reducing dependency on vehicle use;
- An efficient use of the site;
- Energy efficient construction methods and materials used.
- Solar panels provided for future residents.
- Rain water harvesting.
- Air source heat pumps providing heating and hot water – the most energy efficient heating source, especially when powered using solar.

- 5.37 Due to the lessened weight of the local planning authority's housing supply policies,

the opportunity presented to contribute to housing supply in a sustainable location, with minimal impacts, in a location that neighbours an extensive development; we consider this proposal represents sustainable development in a sensible location.

6.0 Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.1 This planning application proposes the development of two houses which are predominantly single storey on land off Elmswell Road and for the creation of two passing places on the access lane.
- 6.2 This site is located directly next to Elmswell and a large 240 home housing development which is currently under construction. This provides a developed backdrop to the application site and connects it directly to the village.
- 6.3 The site is very sustainable and is within easy walking distance to the centre of Elmswell village, entirely using footpaths and pavements. The future occupants of the houses can access the extensive services offered in Elmswell by foot and would not rely on the use of a private vehicle.
- 6.4 Low height properties are proposed because it has been confirmed that there is a need for this housing type in the district, which can provide appropriate accommodation for elderly and retired individuals. The low design of the properties will also be more discrete and will respect the setting of the existing property Warren Mill House. One of the houses has a small mezzanine area which has been designed to make good use of the roof space. This bedroom could be used as a guest room and is not an essential part of this property.
- 6.5 The houses have been designed in a barn style in keeping with the character of the area. These low buildings will be discrete against the wooded backdrop. The properties have been traditionally designed with a black weatherboard exterior and red clay pantile roofs. From wider views, the new properties will appear to be farm buildings connected to Warren Mill House in a traditional arrangement.
- 6.6 The application site falls outside of the Elmswell settlement boundaries as outlined in the 1998 Local Plan. Local Planning policies seek to restrict development in the countryside; however, these policies have been shown to be out of date and are not in keeping with the objectives of the NPPF. Therefore, paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that permission should be granted unless; *“any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.”* As has been shown in this application, there are no adverse impacts of this development, and the benefits of two sustainably located properties have clear benefits economically, socially and environmentally. While Mid Suffolk can show in excess of a 5-year housing land supply,

the pre-application feedback which was received prior to this application being submitted confirmed that this should not be read as a cap on development.

6.7 A comprehensive scheme of landscaping has been put forward with this application which will provide the new properties with well-defined plots which are effectively screened from views to the north. This application has also been submitted with an ecology assessment. This has suggested a range of mitigation and enhancement measures which will result in a biodiversity gain across the site.

6.8 Passing places have been proposed along the access lane as this will allow vehicles to pass should they meet when travelling along the lane in opposite directions. This improvement to the lane will benefit the new houses and the existing house, Warren Mill House.

6.9 This application will have the following benefits:

- Provide two houses appropriate for older residents which there is an established need for in the district.
- Provide houses which as far as possible meet the optional requirements of Building Regulations Part M category 2.
- The development of two houses in a sustainable location within easy walking access to Elmswell, a Key Service centre.
- The development of houses which are sympathetically designed in a rural barn style to respect and compliment their surroundings and Warren Mill House.
- The creation of two high-quality homes with high sustainability which are well insulated and heated using air source heat pumps. The houses will also be equipped with solar panels to provide renewable energy for future residents. Rainwater harvesting equipment will also be installed.
- The development will create a biodiversity gain across the site by the enhancement and mitigation measures put forward.
- A comprehensive scheme of landscaping which will screen the application site and will provide additional natural habitat will be created.

Appendix A – Pre-Application Feedback

PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRY DC/21/06709



Land Adjacent Warren Mill House, Elmswell Road, Wetherden, Suffolk

Site Meeting Date: 05/01/2022

Pre-application Enquiry

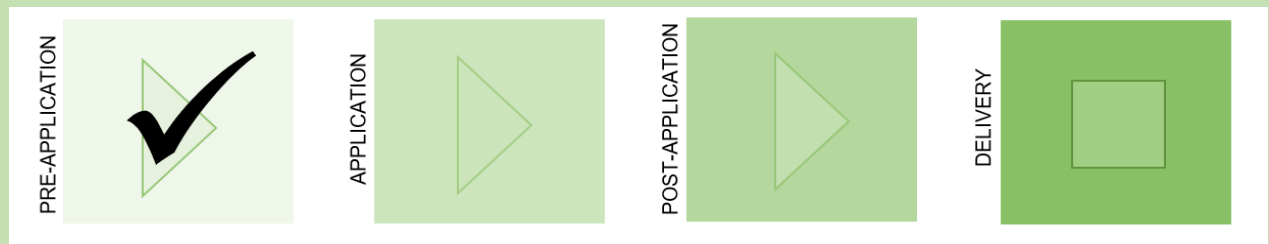
This advice is provided as part of the Council's pre-application advice service.

The advice provided here represents a professional officer opinion based on the material submitted and is given in good faith. The Council as Local Planning Authority must consider every planning application on its own merits after having regard to all material planning considerations. The advice provided here is not in respect of a planning application, has not been subject to public consultation or appropriate statutory consultations and is not necessarily accompanied by all the required supporting material and on that basis the advice is not binding on the Council as the Local Planning Authority.

This Advice does not pre-determine the outcome of any subsequent planning application based on the submitted material and/or the Advice provided.

In providing this Advice the Council is seeking to proactively and constructively provide support to potential applicants seeking to deliver sustainable development as encouraged by the Government within the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] and National Planning Practice Guidance [NPPG]

The Council is permitted to charge for this advice under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2003. The intention is to recover the cost of providing the service and not to deter applicants and their agents from engaging in pre-application discussions.



The Proposal

The proposed development is for:

Erection of 2 No single storey dwellings.

The supporting material comprises:

Site Location Plan - Received 13/12/2021

Planning Statement - Received 13/12/2021

Relevant Planning History

REF: DC/17/03873	Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act - without compliance with Conditions 2, change to roof structure, position of windows and finishing's. (Minor Material Amendment to Planning Permission 2745/13)	DECISION: GTD 04.09.2017
REF: DC/17/04291	Discharge of conditions for 1142/17 - Condition 7 (Mitigation), Condition 3 (Materials), Condition 6 (Materials Roads) and Condition 5 (Surface Drainage)	DECISION: GTD 22.09.2017
REF: DC/17/06026	Discharge of Conditions for Application 1142/17- Conditions 3 (Materials), 5 (Surface water drainage details) and 6 (Details of surface materials for roads and accesses) (resubmission)	DECISION: GTD 05.12.2017
REF: DC/20/05012	Suffolk County Council Consultation Request - EIA Screening and Scoping request within an area identified as the northern extension for the extraction, processing, sale and distribution of sand and gravel with subsequent restoration using inert materials - SCC/0098/20MS/SCREEN	DECISION: RNO 30.11.2020
REF: 0079/14	Erection of single storey rear extension.	DECISION: GTD 12.03.2014
REF: 0078/14	Notification of a proposed larger home extension to extend from the rear wall by 5.5m, with a maximum height of 4m and 2.4m to the eaves.	DECISION: FAN 27.01.2014
REF: 3697/12	Creation of access and driveway	DECISION: REC
REF: 1554/12	Replace 7no. windows; remove blocked up window in south elevation and make good with oak framing; replace 3no. external doors; replace rainwater goods; install 1no. rooflight on east elevation; install new drainage/sewerage system; install central heating system including new boiler; internal works as described in submitted schedule.	DECISION: GTD 13.08.2012
REF: 0790/12	1. Replace all 8 existing rotten softwood windows 2. Replace all 3 external 1970s style softwood doors 3. Replace plastic guttering and downpipe 4. Install heritage style roof light in new bathroom 5. Install new drainage / sewerage system 6. Under-pin sections of the house foundation 7. Repair and lime render chimney stack 8. Install central heating system with external boiler 9. Replace collapsed bedroom ceiling 10. Erect internal partition to create upstairs bathroom 11. Replace the three quarter height (1.8m	DECISION: WDN 04.04.2012

	high), 1930s softwood partition on first floor 12. Install bathroom sanitary ware, plumbing and drainage 13. Install kitchen plumbing and drainage 14. Install toilet / utility room plumbing and drainage 15. Replace unsafe electrical wiring and equipment 16. Remove blocked up window in south elevation 17. Open up inglenook fireplace 18. Remove and re-lay brick floors 19. Replace internal hardboard faced doors	
REF: 4230/11	Works to timber frame and re-roofing	DECISION: REC
REF: 0043/12	Various: Change of use of chicken sheds to holiday let; New vehicular access	DECISION: REC
REF: 4303/11	Render exterior of building with lime plaster (existing concrete render to be removed). Re-roof building (existing pantiles to be reused). Replace existing concrete tiles on rear single-storey extension with slate. Repairs and/or replacement of defective timbers (as necessary following investigation of frame timbers during render replacement).	DECISION: GTD 09.02.2012
REF: 1556/11	Enquiry re barn conversion - within curtilage of listed building. Discussed with PH. Principle seems ok but provision of openings will be challenging. Brick barn, slate roof. SB 6.5.11	DECISION: REC
REF: 0141/09	Sand and gravel extraction from modified mineral working site, restoration to agriculture by disposal of inert waste, and installation of inert waste recovery recycling plant. (The proposal includes a 'land swap' of part of an area with planning approval for sand and gravel extraction for a proposed extension area).	DECISION: RNO 02.02.2009

Planning Policy

Emerging Local Plan – New Joint Local Plan

The Council is currently in the process of drafting the new Joint Local Plan, however policies are not currently sufficiently advanced as to be given weight at this time. However, as the plan emerges and undergoes the stages of consultation the weight given to these policies will increase and may affect the considerations outlined within this advice. You are advised to review the progression of the Local Plan as it comes forward with regards to any impacts new policies may have on this proposal, details are available on the link below.

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF was revised in 2021, and includes, at its heart, a presumption in favour of sustainable development, however this does not affect the statutory status of the development plan (Local Plan) as the starting point for decision making. However, it is still a material consideration in decision making and includes the following relevant requirements:

The Council's Adopted Development Plan is:

- The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and Focused Review (2014)
- The Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) and Proposals Map

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/adopted-documents/mid-suffolk-district-council/>

Relevant Policies include:

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG-National Planning Policy Guidance
FC01 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
FC01_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach To Delivering Sustainable Development
CS01 - Settlement Hierarchy
CS02 - Development in the Countryside & Countryside Villages
CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment
GP01 - Design and layout of development
H07 - Restricting housing development unrelated to needs of countryside
H15 - Development to reflect local characteristics
H16 - Protecting existing residential amenity
H17 - Keeping residential development away from pollution
H19 - Accommodation for special family needs
CL08 - Protecting wildlife habitats
T09 - Parking Standards
T10 - Highway Considerations in Development
CL06 - Tree preservation orders
RT12 - Footpaths and Bridleways

Constraints

The site is located outside of the settlement boundary of Wetherden and outside the boundary of Elmswell, although is adjacent to the boundary of Elmswell and the neighbouring St. John's Mead development. Public rights of way are noted around the site although do not run through it. Significant groups of tree planting nearby to the site are protected by Tree Preservation Orders although, again are not part of the site itself, although a large veteran tree is identified within the site and makes a positive contribution to the area. Discussions on site related to its retention and protection during development should an application come forward.

The site does not contain a listed building and is not within or adjacent to a conservation area. EA Flood Mapping shows the site to fall within flood zone 1, although issues of groundwater flood risk may have to be investigated.

The site itself is fairly flat and laid to grass with a small amount of tree planting to the rear of the existing house. It is not considered that the site is likely providing habitat to protected and priority species, however, this should be supported by a preliminary ecological assessment of the site should an application come forward.

The access to the site is narrow allowing only a single vehicle to traverse it. Given the track ends close to the existing property at the end of the track and is shared by other residential properties located closer to Elmswell Road, it is considered that some attention may need to be given to the provision of a passing place.

Advice:

Principle of Development

The application site is outside the settlement boundary of either Wetheden or Elmswell. As such the proposal is for new residential development in the countryside, contrary to H7 of the Local Plan, and CS1 and CS2 of the Core Strategy.

At the current time the District has a five-year housing land supply, as detailed above, such that this does not engage the tilted balance requirement of the NPPF. However, given the age of both the Core Strategy and the Local Plan, and that they pre-date the publication of the revised NPPF, consideration must be given to their compliance with the NPPF and as such the associated weight of the policy.

The exceptional circumstances test at Policy CS2 applies to all land outside the settlement boundary, as does saved Policy H7. This blanket approach is not consistent with the NPPF, which favours a more balanced approach to decision-making. The NPPF does contain a not dissimilar exceptional circumstances test, set out at paragraph 79, however it is only engaged where development is isolated.

The definition of isolation with regards to this policy has been shown within court judgements to relate to physical isolation, only. Given the proximity of this application to residential development, the development is not isolated and paragraph 80 of the NPPF is not engaged.

Having regard to the advanced age of the Mid Suffolk settlement boundaries and the absence of a balanced approach as favoured by the NPPF, the statutory weight attached to the above policies is reduced as required by paragraph 219. The fact that the site is outside the settlement boundary is therefore not a determinative factor upon which the application turns.

Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF is therefore relevant, which requires that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed;
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

In the light of this assessment is made against the requirements of the NPPF.

The three dimensions of sustainable development set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, in the context of the proposed scheme, are assessed in detail below.

Social – Delivery of housing is a benefit and even though the District can demonstrate in excess of the required housing land supply, this cannot be read as a cap on development. It is considered that it might lessen the need to develop housing not serving the needs of the district or which is located on poorly accessible sites.

Discussions on site noted that the delivery of bungalows on the site would allow the occupants of the existing house to downsize to a more practical property given their health concerns. It might therefore be reasonable to note that users of the proposed dwellings with mobility concerns will likely need properties to be built to a high degree of compliance with the relevant section of Building Regulations (Part M). This might be able to increase the benefits that accrue to the social element of sustainability but would need to be demonstrated within any planning application.

With regards to this site, the development of St. John's Mead, along with other dwellings noted nearby within the planning statement means that the site is likely a sustainable one, especially as a pedestrian connection into Elmswell would be entirely feasible along the existing public rights of way network around the site which would allow pedestrians to access the facilities of Elmswell fairly easily assuming a good degree of mobility. This may not be the case for all users.

Economic – Some benefits would accrue from the construction phase of the development, and some would likely be directed to the services and facilities within Elmswell. These are unlikely to be so beneficial that a high degree with positive weight could be ascribed to them.

Environmental – The site is not noted to be part of any landscape designation but does form part of the countryside around Elmswell and does contribute to it. Existing TPOs and public rights of way do not form part of the site but are present around it. It is considered that the environmental aspect of any application on the site would need to consider both how it is screened and how it impacts on biodiversity net gain, both of which would need to be considered within any planning application. With regards to external TPO's, the narrowness of the access road likely requires some protective measures be applied to development on the site and it is considered that these should be extended to the veteran tree within the site itself which is considered to be a positive environmental feature of the site and should be retained.

Sustainability

The owner of the site has already installed heat pump technology within their existing dwelling and consider that it may be beneficial to do so here as well. This is welcomed and attention is also drawn to the potential to integrating other sustainability measures within the site as well. Nearby properties have integrated solar panels on their southerly facing roofs which would be beneficial here, especially if a heat pump is to be installed. Design consideration should also be given to making the most of passive solar heating as well as the thermal efficiency of insulation. Electric vehicle charging points should also be provided.

Design

Design details are absent from the pre-application enquiry. Bungalows have been suggested and it is considered that this is the correct way to proceed with the site given that it is in a raised position when compared to the properties at both Elmswell Road and the neighbouring St. John's Mead development. It is also considered that attention will need to be given to boundary landscaping to the site.

Highways, Access and Parking

Parking to the bungalows will need to demonstrate that they meet the requirements set out within adopted Parking Standards and will be dependent on the number of bedrooms within the bungalows.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/parking-guidance/>

The access road to the site is narrow and serves multiple properties already. While the majority of them are located close to the access point with Elmswell Road, it is considered that additional dwellings utilising the access will likely increase the chances of conflict between the users of the access road. It is considered that some attention will need to be given to the potential to create a passing place along the length of the access or whether other actions are required in order to minimise the need for vehicles to queue on the public highway. It will likely be necessary to consider a construction management plan should development be granted permission in order to show how vehicles, particularly large vehicles would access the site.

Residential Amenity

Consideration will need to be given to the development of the neighbouring site and the existing neighbouring dwelling in order to ensure that overlooking and overshadowing impacts on the proposed bungalows are avoided.

Conclusions/ Planning Balance

Proposed development on the site borrows heavily from the fact that it sits adjacent to a large-scale development. It is considered to be highly beneficial that the site benefits from pedestrian walking routes to Elmswell and that a connection to the centre of the village could be made within 15 to 20 minutes.

Justification will need to be demonstrated within the supporting documents that come forward within any application with regards to the sustainable nature of the application site. Consideration will also need to be given towards the design of the site, sustainability measures, access arrangements, protection for natural features both within the site and neighbouring the site.

It is considered that an outline planning application could be considered, however, it should clearly demonstrate that the proposed development be for single-storey dwellings, limiting the height and number of dwellings to be brought forward. It is considered that if an outline application is made, access and scale should be secured at the same time, although if that is preferred it is recommended that a landscape strategy be submitted to support this.

A full application could also be brought forward and would be beneficial if there is a need to progress the development due to deteriorating health. It may also be worth considering whether a lower number of dwellings would be preferred if the applicants would prefer to continue to live in a more isolated position as they currently enjoy.

Expected Supporting Material in the Event of a Planning Application

Our Joint Local Validation Checklist sets out the details required for each application and this is available at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/development-management/apply-for-planning-permission/national-and-local-validation-requirements/> However on the basis of the information provided I would particularly draw your attention to the need to provide:

- Application form, ownership certificate and appropriate fee.
- Plans
- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Preliminary Ecology Appraisal
- Land Contamination Report
- Tree Protection Plan

This is not an exhaustive list of all documents and information which need to support your application, as mentioned above please consult the Joint Local Validation Checklist.

- For all types of development you can submit electronically via the Planning Portal https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200232/planning_applications (please note that applying via this site may incur a submission charge)
- For all types of development you can download the relevant application form from the Planning Portal and send to us by email or post https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/61/paper_forms

Contributions

Community Infrastructure Levy

Applications for development are subject to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

All new build development over 100sqm (internal), including residential extensions and annexes and all new dwellings regardless of size must pay CIL.

CIL is payable on Permitted Development as well as Planning Permission development

CIL is payable when the development is commenced and you must notify of commencement using the appropriate forms

Failure to submit a Form 6 Commencement Notice and give a minimum of 1 days notice of commencement will result in the loss of exemptions, relief and/or the right to pay CIL by instalments.

As part of any application you will need to submit the appropriate CIL form. Further information is available on our website:

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy-and-section-106/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/>

The CIL forms are also available online:

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/70/community_infrastructure_levy/5

The phasing of community infrastructure levy (CIL) payments may be very important to your cash flow and viability of a development, especially for major developments and any development with Self Build Housing aspirations. If it is intended at any time that your development will be phased then you will need to ensure such phasing is expressly detailed in the planning application prior to determination. You should ensure phasing is clear within the description of development, any conditions imposed and any planning obligations. You will need to also ensure the planning case officer is fully aware of the intention to phase the development and include a phasing plan that shows the relevant phases of the development as well as a clear linear sequence of such phases that would align with the phasing of CIL payments you would find acceptable.

Building Control

Pre-application advice is also available from our Building Control Team. Find information online: <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/building-control/> or contact the Building Control Manager, Paul Hughes, on 01449 724502. We can offer specialist support, local knowledge and a quality service with expert independent and impartial advice.

Charges include access to the surveyor appointed for any query that may arise before or during construction as well as a tailored inspection regime including inspections which only need to be booked by 10am on the day the inspection is required.

We can also provide carbon emission / fabric energy efficiency calculations at pre-application stage to support planning applications and the necessary Part L calculations and Energy Performance Certificates for Building Regulations compliance and our partners at LABC Warranty can offer a very competitive warranty for all new dwellings which we would be happy to provide further details for / liaise with on your behalf.

NOTES

Please note that any advice provided by the Council's Officers is informal opinion only and is made without prejudice to any formal determination which may be given in the event of an application being submitted. In particular, it will not constitute a formal response or decision of the Council with regard to any future planning applications, which will be subject to wider consultation and publicity. Although the Case Officer may indicate the likely outcome of a subsequent planning application, no guarantees can or will be given about the decision.

This advice is based on the information provided, background details and constraints at the current time. These circumstances can change and this may affect the advice you have received. You may wish to seek confirmation that the circumstances have not changed if you are considering submitting an application and any substantial amount of time has passed since the date of this advice.

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27th January 2022

Any questions please contact us



Appendix B – Elmswell Facilities Map



Elmswell

1. Pre-school
2. Primary school
3. Library
4. Co-op food store
5. Post Office
6. Hair Salon
7. Fish-bar
8. Takeaway
9. Fire station
10. Pub (The Railway Tavern)
11. Methodist church and hall's
12. Pub (The Fox)
13. Railway Station
14. Play area
15. Pharmacy
16. Business park
17. MOT centre
18. Veterinary services
19. Tea rooms
20. Butchers
21. Convenience store
22. Day care
23. Recreational ground
24. Bowls green
25. Community centre
26. Baptist church
- B. Bus stops