

Ref: 20/00630/FUM – Brick Lane, Mepal

Erection of 55 dwellings, new access, estate roads, driveways, parking areas, open space, external lighting, substation and associated infrastructure

Neighbour Comments:

Residential Amenity

- Loss of privacy, overbearing, over shadowing and overlooking to properties on Brick Lane, noise. Loss of privacy due to trees being removed and from the proposed driveways opposite properties on Brick Lane which will also have noise impacts due to noise echoing through concrete jungle.
- Pollution from extra traffic resulting in harm to residents of Brick Lane and neighbouring properties.
- Housing layouts and garden areas are small and cramped for potential residents
- Not enough outdoor space impacting on living conditions.
- Parking limited which will create tensions with neighbours.
- Impacts of noise and street lighting for residents on Brick Lane.
- Gardens are too small.
- Unsuitable location due to noise from traffic – closed windows and trickle vents not ethical to mitigate noise.
- Development overcrowded and is not an acceptable environment to live in.
- Concerns that size of homes and plots are so cramped because they are affordable homes. Everyone should have a decent size plot and home.
- Residential amenity will be poor for development and surrounding areas due to noise and disturbance being increased. Harmony between old and new residents would not be easy due to parking.
- Development will cause stress to existing occupants and will create an unhealthy environment for residents and nearby households quality of life.
- Removal of trees will create more traffic noise.
- The cramped nature of the development will make it unfriendly for pedestrians and unsafe for children.
- House sizes and plots based on minimum standards and not decent standards.

Visual Amenity

- Affects public views and street scene.
- Objects to impacts on the grounds of form and character.
- Landscape impacts and visual amenity.
- Worst design ever due to impacts on residents of Brick Lane. Entrance should be off the main road with a roundabout.
- Removal of trees will result in harm to the existing street scene.

- Cramped and over-developed design which will result in a negative environment and awful advert for Mepal.
- Principles of design have not been followed.
- Excessive number of units and consequential overloading of the villages services will blight the character, charm and amenities of existing community.
- Development will result in an overpowering and negative impact on the residential amenities of existing residents of Mepal.
- Concerned at impact of social housing on visual amenity in this prominent location.
- Overdevelopment based on quantity rather than quality.
- Out of keeping with the existing village.
- Little green space proposed.
- Concerns over visual impacts to entrance of village particularly ongoing stewardship and maintenance of the estate and car parking spilling out.
- Dense, over crowded eyesore in this rural village.
- The development overbears the existing housing on Brick Road.
- The scale, size and types of dwellings are totally out of keeping in this small rural village.
- Development is inconsiderate, speculative, premature and is not appropriate to the local context.
- It will dominate the village visually on entering the area and appear out of context with the settling the of the village within its surrounding environment.
- The development will not enhance the entrance to Mepal as stated by the developer. This development will destroy the charm and tranquillity of the village.
- The size and density would destroy what makes living in the village attractive.
- Design principles have not been applied in favour of cramming in housing.
- Green area too small and has parking on it.
- The whole village has been built up with very few open spaces.
- Impacts to Conservation Area, form and character of proposal, effects on public views.

Highway Safety

- Objections in regard to parking and turning, highway safety.
- Recent survey showed 91% of residents considered using Brick Lane as an access was unsuitable due to: pulling out on a gradient, poor visibility, amount of nearby junctions, nearby bus stop where school children wait and cross, buses obstructing visibility, road surface is poor, road too narrow, no footpath to the south and very close to ditch.
- Development should not be accessed through Brick Lane.
- Entrance should be off the main road with a roundabout.
- Brick Lane not wide enough to comply with regulations.
- A142 junction is difficult to exit onto. The increased volume of traffic would exacerbate this with the potential for an extra 110 cars from this development.
- A142 junction needs upgrading before any development takes place.

- Development entrance should be off Sutton Road.
- Brick lane too narrow. Only measures 4.9m in width
- Added hazards due to increased use of Sutton Road.
- Queries transport assessment being based on assumption that movements per dwelling will be similar to those of existing properties which could be unsound.
- Site should be accessed via Sutton Road, immediately joining the existing junction with Witcham Road via a pair of mini roundabouts or traffic lights, also assisting in reducing speed entering the village. This would bring a positive benefit.
- There is no cycleway from Mepal joining the cycle path at Sutton. Access would be by the A142 which is far from ideal.
- Concerns over increased traffic and speeding traffic on Sutton Road. 504 additional car journeys per day which will have huge impacts.
- Developer to install road safety measures.
- Access onto the A142 with additional 55 houses would become a serious bottleneck at commuting times.
- Many accidents have occurred at A142 junction.
- Difficulties will occur getting out of Brick Lane result in safety hazards.
- Parking issues will be created if access via Brick Lane. Residents on Brick Lane will not be able to access their dwellings.
- Proposed access is dangerous.
- Proposal will cause a rat run through Witcham village due to difficulties access the A142.
- No onsite parking for commercial vehicles which will result in parking elsewhere in village.
- Gradient leading up to Sutton Road from Brick Lane where vehicles are unable to drive up in icy conditions.
- Bus stop causes visibility issues when a bus is stopped.
- There has been no upgrade of speed restrictions and this is needed after entering village from A142.
- A142 is at capacity due to local cumulative development.
- Construction access should not be via Sutton Road.
- Water mains pipe run under the verge of No 2 and water hydrant. Concerns over access to these from parked cars and for emergency vehicles.
- Highways response states road layout is unsafe.
- In the winter when flooding occurs at Welney excessive traffic on A142 causing problems accessing and exiting the village.
- Problems with emergency services accessing with one road in and out.
- Roundabouts needed on A142 and development should be accessed via mini roundabout at Sutton Road/Witcham Road junction.
- Accident risk for people getting to and from and on and off at the bus stops.
- Highways have stated roads to be provided are not of an adoptable standard and current proposal is unsafe for road users. Waste cannot be collected from unadopted roads.

- No updated comments received from highways in regard to other proposed access and insufficient thought has been given to alternatives.
- Brick Lane not suitable access, parking of new residents will block this road.

Drainage/Water

- Objects in regard to foul water drainage, groundwater issues and surface water drainage.
- Water treatment plant is already at capacity. Barely copes with Mepal's waste now.
- Ongoing problems within village, specifically flooding of sewage for some properties.
- Part of the site floods. What will happen to surface water.
- Development on this land will cause severe damage to the existing ecology.
- Concerns over rainwater drainage due to expanses of hard surfaces and built form and limited porous surfaces and garden areas.
- Rainwater will need to be discharged to ditches which will cause soil erosion and increased risk of flooding due to drainage systems being overwhelmed.
- Concerns as to pollution from surface water.
- Concerns over maintenance of drainage and SUDS and communal permeable paving which can't be adopted by County.
- Anglia water have not been consulted? Water provision and disposal has been a major issue with recent smaller developments in the village.
- Concerns over filling in ditch along Brick Lane.

Biodiversity/Trees and Landscape

- Removal of trees will result in loss of character and harm to residential amenity.
- Not enough open green space to balance out the hard landscaping and built form.
- Removing the hedge in Brick Lane will result in increased noise impacts.
- Removing the hedge is bad for the environment in terms of pollution.
- Who will be responsible for landscape maintenance.
- Large loss of local habitat accumulated with developments in Witchford and Sutton.
- The development site acts as a wildlife corridor.
- Proposal does not respect the environment.
- Loss of hedgerows, trees and wildlife when climate change is key.
- No sufficient space to allow for the proposed trees and hedges to flourish due to density of build and infrastructure.
- Objects to the removal of established habitat – hedgerow survey needs to be completed to determine if this is appropriate in line with council's policy to protect/improve biodiversity.
- Plans looked cramped with communal green space mainly taken up with parking.

- Removing the hedgerow is contrary to ENV1 which stresses the importance of enhancing features and their function as ecological corridors for wildlife dispersal.
- The recently established treeline around the perimeter of the site, funded by set-aside grants, should be ensured.
- It would take up farmland and ignores the purpose of the development envelope.
- Development on edge of Lillibet Wood and will have a detrimental effect on local biodiversity.
- Light pollution from street lighting and homes harming wildlife and dark night skies.
- Development should be designed to enhance the environment, biodiversity and air quality.
- The Elm Trees are in good condition and provide a valuable screen for Brick Lane and are supporting at least one protected species of invertebrate and should be retained.
- There is inconsistency in the Arboricultural Services Report dated January 2019 and concerns relating to the time of year surveys were completed in regard and comments as to the ill health of some of the trees.
- Regional Butterfly Conservation Officer stated that it will be difficult to recreate the existing Elm habitat, supported by Cambs Wildlife report in which it stated the retention of the elms should be considered and no replacements have been planned.
- The Preliminary Eco report dated September 2019 did not complete a count from an appropriate position above the tree canopy where the protected white letter hairstreak butterfly predominantly lives and omitted to mention the elm trees from the native planting – appendix A.
- This area of land, as evidenced by the limited surveys presented in this application, provides an environment that supports special and local species of plants and invertebrates and measures should be put in place to protect it as an environment for important species that cannot be replaced.
- Concerns if any trees/hedges have to be destroyed. Also anything that would impede hedgehogs moving freely between gardens and extra light pollution.
- Impacts on the environment in light of climate emergency.

Other

- Local Housing Register data queried and how the figures are made up.
- Amount of affordable homes is excessive for area and queries the use by for non-local people which negates the logic of providing such housing within easy reach of existing employment, family etc.
- Excessive number of bungalows which will result in retiree occupation and distorting age profile of community.
- Housing mix is not adequate and social housing share is disproportionate – should be 1 in 7.

- Commercial parking of vehicles should not be banned from development to stop residents parking this off site on neighbouring roads.
- Scheme does not accord with current Local Plan.
- The Community Led Plan has identified the need for more single dwellings for the ageing population and would urge planning committee to study the Community Led Plan.
- Does not feel 100% affordable is appropriate.
- Concerns over nursery school, school places and GP facilities with increase in population.
- Local facilities such as doctor's surgery and school struggling to cope now – increase is not attainable.
- Site is not in Local Plan and is defined as countryside.
- Over development of village.
- The village needs more facilities to support this size of development.
- This type of development will result in anti-social behaviour and noise.
- Infrastructure cannot cope with more demand frequent problems with power cuts and sewage issues. Smaller development should be brought forward with infrastructure considered first.
- Will local people get first refusal on properties?
- Volume of affordables disproportionate and out of keeping with current mix of housing resulting in significant harm to the character of the village and damage to residential amenity.
- Affordables should be spread through village, not grouped together as risk becoming isolated.
- No identified need for 55 affordables for this area and nowhere has stated requirements to allow more than 30-40% on any on development.
- Only 11 affordable houses identified as needed in Mepal, with 83 household 'willing' to live in Mepal. This is not a preference as housing applicants tick all the villages they are willing to live in.
- Affordable housing percentage is disproportionate to size of village.
- Mepal has already had planning approved on 30 sites which has addressed the requirement for extra housing identified in Local Plan.
- Insufficient consultation with Mepal residents.
- Proposed 12% housing increase does not constitute an exception site under NPPF para 71 as it exceeds 5% of the size of existing settlement and is not proportionate.
- Does not comply with HOU2 or SUT1.
- Affordable should be provided as 'part of' a well designed ... as set in Para 4.4.9
- The need for housing, as identified in local plan and Sutton Plan Policy NP7, is 'a mix of housing types..... Development does not meet stated requirements.
- Additional housing is required, but better solution would be 30% affordable mix with expansion of sewage system and direct access onto Sutton Road.
- Increased pressures in water supply and risk of water leaks.
- Local amenities under threat and lack of interest. Bus service not adequate.

- Accessibility – Infrequent bus service, incomplete cycle route and limited walking opportunities.
- Demand to live in Mepal is low as demonstrated by housing market. Housing exceeds demands.
- Rented housing proposed is not affordable housing but social housing.
- Housing mix is unsuitable.
- On-site parking is not sufficient.
- Village amenities are not sufficient to support this level of housing which are dependent on car usage.
- Mepal is not sufficient/sustainable for the creation of anything other than a car dependant community.
- No references have been made to the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan which is relevant for this site.
- Proposal creates an isolated/stand-alone development.
- Proposal does against all sustainable principles, it will severely overload the limited and stretched amenities and infrastructure.
- Development has no benefit to the village.
- Mepal makes up 1.17% of E Cambs population. This site would accommodate 10.4% of the districts entire affordable housing requirement which is completely disproportionate with the size of the existing settlement and contravenes Sutton NP and para 4.4.9 of the Local Plan.
- The application does not match the specific needs either in number or type of property.
- Very few jobs in immediate local vicinity – car is essential to commute to employment areas due to poor public transport.
- Errors highlight in Statement of Community Involvement: Shown in neighbour response received on 22 June from 5 Brick Lane.
- The restrictive covenants in regards to parking and increase in traffic due to poor public transport, will create chaos in the village.
- No public meetings been possible due to Covid so unable to air community's views and have questions answered.
- Concerns over non-local people being housed in community.
- Supports the need for housing however proposal is not suitable for this type of village.
- Development would change the dynamics of the village.
- If there is to be a development at Mepal it should be a more suitably balanced mix to meet the specific need and capacity of the village, 35% Social, 35% Shared Ownership and 30% Private Purchase would be a more sensible proposal.
- Brick Lane is being used just because it's cheaper.
- NPPF states exception sites should not be larger than one hectare or exceed 5% of the size of the settlement. Clearly this application is larger than this and should be refused.
- Proposal does not meet requirements of COM7 and COM8.

- Mepal will become a dumping ground. People would prefer to reside in other areas with better amenities/employment and services. It will create an oppressive environment.
- Accept affordable home are needed but will leave remainder of district short. Would welcome a revised scheme based on housing needs and a design in keeping with the village.
- Timing of the application during national pandemic is inappropriate and is being used to minimise proper debate.
- Plans do not show locations for 4/5 bed units. Clarification needed.
- Proposal has a housing density of 20.91/hectare not 20 stated on the application and is higher than the 19 recommended in the local plan.
- Proposal will impact the value of properties on Brick Lane, block views and overwhelm the bungalow.
- Proposal does not comply with HOU4 – Mepal has limited services and poor access via cycle and foot to access services at Sutton
- Local Plan states Mepal can expect 22 new dwellings which should be built on infill sites between now and 2031. The development will more than double that.
- Why are 55 affordables being built in Mepal when only 11 applicants have links?
- Why is a Suffolk company being allowed to build these?
- Not enough parking in site – cars and commercial vehicles will spill out onto streets.
- Internet access not adequate for existing residents.
- Developer not accepting any responsibility for cars having to park off site due to restrictions.
- Bin collection problems due to unadopted road.

Comments in regard to additional material submitted

- Additional information submitted by developer do not address the concerns therefore all objections raised still stand.
- Applicant provides housing for people with anti-social behaviour which questions appropriateness in this predominantly aged and vulnerable community.
- Consideration has not been given to communication methods of older and vulnerable population and application responses have not be given sufficient timescales.
- The responses provided to the objections do not address the issues and are inadequate, mostly being ignored by the applicant. Fundamental supporting documents are still missing or partly completed.
- Amendments to the scheme are not evident.
- All objections raised need solutions and reconsidering and significant amendments and an open event with the village. These concerns have not been addressed.

- Existing trees and vegetation will only mask the development for 6 months of the year due to leaf drop. Proposed traffic movements of 504 per day is not considered to be negligible. Modest increase in population will not be modest as over 12%. Contradictions to cycle links.
- Comments received in connection with the Creating Homes and Community brochure from Havebury Housing reiterating the impacts to the village, despite the promotion of Havebury Housing and their values.
- In response to the Developer's response to the Neighbour Consultee Comments:
 - Disputes the Design Team response that the site will have 10% more biodiversity net gain as demonstrated by the biodiversity net gain assessment by applied Ecology (to be submitted) – how can they declare this within the assessment being available?
 - Developer stated Anglian Water were contacted and their response was positive – no formal response has been received and due to neighbour concerns regarding the increased pressure on the sewerage, this will need further investigation and should form part of any planning consent.
 - Developer states the proposal being a natural extension of the village and mirroring Chestnut Way development. Chestnut Way are all bungalow whereas the proposal are houses therefore cannot be considered to mirror. Further, location and siting of Chestnut Way is much more generous and different tenure. Chestnut Way is an adopted road, whereas Highways have indicated they would not adopt the proposed development.
 - The existing residents of Mepal's views have been largely ignored.
 - Developer states the new development and associated disposable income will help support local services and facilities. Mepal has limited facilities and most residents would need to drive outside of Mepal to access local services and as such disposable income will be spent outside of village.
 - The proposed 5 bed home being specifically built to meet the needs of a local family. Suggested providing alternative accommodation to facilitate this family to suit their immediate need.
 - The development is not conducive to the immediate and wider community's needs should not be approved as 100% affordable.
 - The developer should take responsibility for ensuring safety to pedestrians and road users and not defer this to another body to take responsibility for as indicated in their response.
 - Disputes the developer's statement that the additional homes will generate a negligible increase in vehicle movements. Any increase will have an impact at peak times. Also seeks confirmation as to when updated accident data was submitted to County Council.
 - No S106 monies are going to be allocated to the village's infrastructure or to a cycle route between Mepal and Sutton.
 - The amendments do not change the fact the development is too large for a village the size of Mepal and will cause considerable problems with access, traffic etc.

- The amendments are minor compared to the big issues that the village has. These need to be addressed.
- No mention of the serious concerns raised in resident objections. These need to be addressed, eg the development being outside of the development envelope, density of housing, size of development lack of green space, surface water collection and sewage/foul water drainage connections and treatment plants, ecological treatment plant, road conditions at Brick Lane or impending traffic problems and off-street parking requirements, tenure of properties, lack of village facilities
- Regarding the amendments dated 05/10/20, despite the proliferation of information, very little has in fact changed and there remains little regard for the voice of the village and the valid objections.
- Amendments have failed to address the original concerns. Strongly opposed to proposal.
- Plansurv have ignored biodiversity issues and are not offering suitable solutions.
- Has all the necessary documentation now been received? There are no responses from Anglian Water etc.
- This application will increase the population of Mepal by 25% and will heavily impact on infrastructure. The existing community is being ignored and effectively being dumped on.
- I understand that there is a requirement for more housing and that aspects of that need to be affordable, but not to this volume and not in a rural setting such as Mepal.
- I am unable to view anything about the development. Would like to reiterate original objections. Many people in the village are very concerned about this development but not everyone who has voiced concerns has the time or IT ability to respond.
- Not happy that many of my concerns from my original letter have been addressed. Still unsatisfied with the proposal and amendments suggested.