

PARISH REPORT JANUARY 2024

ORWELL & VILLAGES

New Planning Referral Process now in place

The long-awaited triple lock procedure for planning referrals was approved at the full council meeting in January. Below is a summary of the key elements:

Stage 1 – The consultation period for Town and Parish Councils and District Ward Members

Within the 21-day consultation period of a planning application – which includes up to the Expiry Date found on Public Access – a response must be received on the application from the Ward Member if you choose to make a comment. This period can include within an extension of time for comments agreed with the case officer. You can *‘object with reasons’, ‘support with reasons’, or just ‘recognise local concerns, views or effects (or similar) and confirm that you wish for the application to be determined by the Planning Committee’*. The latter can be a useful approach if you wish to show that you are keeping an open mind if you are also a member of or future substitute on a Planning Committee.

Stage 2 – The call-in notification process is triggered

Once the case officer has considered all consultation responses and they have decided what their recommendation will be they will commence a notification to the relevant North or South Planning Committee Members **if:**

The case officer is recommending approval and the Town/Parish Council objects, **and** the Ward Member objects or has asked for a committee determination, **or**

The case officer is recommending refusal, and the Town/Parish Council supports, **and** the Ward Member supports or has asked for a committee determination.

The Notification email shall be sent to all Planning Committee North or Planning Committee South members by the case officer and shall include:

- The case reference number, the description of development and the address
- A link to Public Access to view the application and documents.
- A copy of Town or Parish Council response
- A copy of the Ward Member response
- A sentence setting out the likely officer recommendation.
- The deadline for a call-in response
- Details of who must be copied into the response.

Stage 3 – The Committee Member Call-in

After the notification has been sent, any member of the relevant North or South Planning Committee must respond within 5 working days if they wish to confirm that it should be considered by the Planning Committee.

Any Planning Committee member calling the application in must 'reply to all' (including all members of the relevant Planning Committee) and the first response received will be taken as the call-in request. They must also copy in the Town/Parish Council and the Ward Member(s).

A call-in request from a Planning Committee member must set out how they consider it meets the expectation that : “The proposal would be of significant public interest; would have a significant impact on the environment; or should otherwise be referred to Members due to its significance in some other respect”.

When a Committee Member Call-in has been received, the case officer will proceed to place the case on a Planning Committee agenda in either the next available month or at the earliest opportunity available after having completed the report and obtained all necessary information for the committee to consider.

If no Stage 3 Committee Member Call-in is received, then the application will be presented to the next available Referral Panel. This process will provide a 2nd opportunity for the four Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Planning Committee to consider whether the application should be referred to the Planning Committee or be a delegated decision.

As the comment from the ward member is required to be made within the 21-day consultation period it is very important that parish councils make their local councillors aware of their decision on applications particularly if the application may look non-controversial, but the parish council has reason to object.

Funding gap forces Council to halt flood barrier scheme

Following the emergence of a £124m funding gap caused by crippling cost increases, and with no immediate prospect of additional funding being secured, the decision has been taken to halt work on the project to construct a tidal flood barrier in Lowestoft. This scheme forms part of the Lowestoft Flood Protection programme, which has already seen the completion of 1.5km of tidal walls to help mitigate the impacts of weather events. The project team has engaged with both the Government and the Environment Agency to seek the additional funding needed. Although discussions have been ongoing for more than a year, it is clear a decision by the Government and EA will not be made before additional spending must be committed to by the Council. Therefore, East Suffolk Council has been left with no alternative but to halt work on the tidal barrier element of the scheme.

Formal response to Sea Link

East Suffolk Council has raised a number of key concerns in response to consultation on proposals for a major energy infrastructure project. The Council submitted its written response, agreed by Cabinet, to National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) as part of statutory consultation into the Sea Link project, which is one of several reinforcement projects proposed as part of the Great Grid Upgrade. The objections include that the proposals provide insufficient levels of coordination with other nationally significant infrastructure projects proposed in the locality and that the proposals are likely to result in further unacceptable harm, alone and in combination, to the communities, environment, and economy of East Suffolk.

North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood

Felixstowe and Peninsula residents are invited to join a new panel which will enable the views and needs of local people to be considered in the development of a new garden neighbourhood in the north of the town. East Suffolk Council is leading the master-planning process for a new neighbourhood. Approximately 143ha of land to the north of Felixstowe and Trimley St Mary were identified in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 as being suitable for a garden neighbourhood comprising green infrastructure, community facilities and employment land alongside residential development. Community engagement is key to the master-planning process and a range of events and ways to comment will be developed to ensure the local community is kept up to date and that local needs are being considered. An important element is the formation of a Citizens' Panel, a demographically representative group of local people brought together to learn about the project and provide their thoughts. Residents can register their interest in joining the panel and find out more about the garden neighbourhood at www.northfelixstowe.co.uk.

Locality Budgets

We both have some monies still available for projects and good causes within our area. The Funds need to be allocated by 29th February at the latest so if you do have ideas ready for completion, please let us know. Don't worry if your ideas are not ready yet as 2024 funding begins in April.

If parish councillors wish to contact either of us, please feel free to do so.

Cllr Mike Ninnmey: Home tel no 01394 677210 Mobile: 07823 372503

E-mail: mike.ninnmey@eastssuffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Lee Reeves: Home tel no 01394 284506 (preferred) Mobile 07823 372501

E-mail: lee.reeves@eastssuffolk.gov.uk