

Suffolk Coastal Site Allocation Meeting.

I shall attend at SCDC Council Chamber tomorrow in time for the Site Allocation Meeting which will begin at 09:30.

I shall be representing the interests of Kelsale-cum-Carlton Parish, on the basis that (i) there are already sufficient houses in the villages, of “entry level” type, that (ii) the infrastructure of the combined villages cannot reasonably be asked to take any more housing, that (iii) a disproportionate number of houses are used as holiday or second homes and that (iv) it would not be economically viable to try to provide affordable housing on the usual ratio of one in four.

I shall refer to the letter dated 26th May which sets out the principal arguments and asks why the original allocation of 10 houses was increased to 20, and then to 30, without reference to the parish and without any local consultation. The letter must be read and taken into account as it clarified the problems with overcrowding at the school, where parking and drop-off concerns are a permanent danger. It argues that the bus routes are inadequate, the surgery is already overburdened, and there is no local shopping available at all. The sites as identified do not have mains drainage, and would depend on individual Klargesters systems. The also letter outlines the shape, size and style of housing that might be acceptable.

The villages of Kelsale and Carlton have already been used as a significant dormitory for Saxmundham. Immediately after WWII when Saxmundham still had a cinema, gas-works, sawmill, a very busy cattle market and the Angel and White Hart pubs were flourishing there was a considerable housing need which was satisfied by building estates in Kelsale and Carlton. There were three significant developments of former Council Houses:- (i) East View with 20 houses, (ii) West View and the Old Main Road, with 30 houses, and (iii) Beaumont Cottages with 116 houses, totalling 166 houses. Of course many have been purchased by their occupiers under the Right to Buy scheme, but the local infrastructure of drains, services, schooling, etc was created to serve that housing stock. There are at present roughly 480 houses in the combined villages and so the former Council Houses represents 35% of the total housing.

This must be compared with Saxmundham, where the main Council Housing is located in Saxon Road, which has 164 houses, and Mill Road with another 74 totalling 238 houses. The total number of houses in Saxmundham is in the region of 1500, showing Council houses there represent 16% of the whole housing stock.

Later developments in Saxmundham in Brook Farm and Warren Road are presumed to have kept pace with the status quo, with the result that the percentage will not have changed.

Accordingly I present that Kelsale has “done its bit” in providing accommodation.

Further the housing in the two villages contains a high proportion of second and holiday homes. In the central triangle of roads in Kelsale, namely Church Lane, Denny’s Lane and Bridge Street there are 30 houses of which 13 are not fully occupied. They are either holiday lettings or second homes. Kelsale is a very sought-after village as it has no traffic, thanks to Saxmundham’s by-pass and, as a result of its popularity should probably qualify for the same sort of occupancy restriction, in planning terms, that applies in parts of the Lake District to ensure that housing is reserved for persons who have lived in the village for a given period,.

Also, the proportion of housing that ought to be allocated for affordable units is currently often proving to be unworkable and uneconomic. Housing Associations will not often take on single units. This might seem to be an argument in favour of a large scale development, but in reality as the such a development should be ruled out for the reasons stated above, a lesser scheme would provide little or no benefit to the housing community where entry level housing is very much in demand.

The result is that Kelsale-cum-Carlton should be left basically as it is, except that the original allocation of ten housing should advance and be found by normal organic growth.