

## Chelmsford

Strutt & Parker LLP  
Coval Hall, Rainsford Road  
Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2QF  
Telephone 01245 258201

chelmsford@struttandparker.com  
[www.struttandparker.com](http://www.struttandparker.com)



Planning Policy Team  
Suffolk Coastal District Council  
Melton Hill  
Woodbridge  
Suffolk  
IP12 1AU

30<sup>th</sup> August 2016

Dear Sir Madam,

### **Leiston Neighbourhood Plan: Submission Stage Consultation Version (Regulation 16)**

I write on behalf of my clients Leiston Land Ltd and Pigeon Investment Management Ltd in relation to the above.

#### **Background**

My clients have specific land interests in part of the Land at St Margaret's Crescent identified for residential development at Policy SA3 of the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan (LNP). The site is the subject of an outline planning application to Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) for up to 77 dwellings with associated vehicular access, parking, infrastructure and amenity space. The planning application was made to SCDC on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016 (application reference DC/16/2104/OUT). The consultation period for the application ended on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016. It has been the subject of detailed discussions with SCDC and consultees before and after submission. Areas for clarification with the application have been resolved with SCDC and it is now awaiting determination by SCDC's Planning Committee.

In bringing forward the planning application for this proposed site my clients have sought to ensure that the proposals closely reflect the objectives of the emerging LNP and have actively engaged in meetings with the Town Council and local residents. We therefore welcome the opportunity to comment and we generally support the LNP and the proposals for SA3 now that it has reached Submission Stage.

We set out our comments below by reference to chapters, policies and/or supporting paragraphs of the LNP.

#### **Chapter 3 – Vision and Objectives**

We consider that the Submission LNP has been well prepared reflecting the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting Planning Practice Guidance. It has been the subject of extensive engagement with the local community and sets out a locally distinctive vision for Leiston to become a thriving service centre to meet the needs of its residents and the surrounding villages for the period up to 2029, with clearly defined objectives to achieve its vision.



We support the approach of the LNP to shape and influence the planned development for the town in a positive manner for the benefits it will bring rather than as a tool to stop important development proposals from proceeding.

## **Chapter 5 – Housing**

We note that the LNP housing policies reflect and support the strategic policies in the Suffolk Coastal District Council Core Strategy and the emerging Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Local Plan. Quite correctly, the LNP makes it clear that housing requirements have to be set as a minimum. This is in line with the Independent Examiner of the Woodcote Neighbourhood Plan who concluded that the "...imposition of a maximum figure for housing creates a significant and fundamental conflict with the Framework [as it would] not allow for any new residential development, no matter how sustainable, above the maximum figure". However, he also advised that "...adopting this approach does not mean any development goes in Woodcote. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and those set out nationally and locally would still control development". We are pleased that the LNP follows this approach.

### **Waste Water Capacity (paragraphs 5.18-5.22)**

The LNP suggest that there is a potential constraint to future housing growth with the Water Recycling Centre in Leiston nearing the capacity of its discharge consent. Since the LNP was published and following the submission of various planning applications for housing at Leiston at Saxmundham Road, Red House Lane, Carr Avenue, Abbey Road, Leiston Road, and St. Margaret's Crescent detailed discussions have been held with Anglian Water (AW) and the Environment Agency (EA).

In a Joint Statement issued by AW and EA on 18th August 2016 to SCDC they have confirmed that: there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed employment and residential growth identified in the latest review of Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and indeed in the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan. The Joint Statement confirms that there is sufficient capacity for all the potential connections that AW and the EA are currently aware of in Leiston including the planning applications under consideration and that in addition there would be some surplus capacity for other windfall sites that may come along.

Against this background it is suggested that paragraphs 5.18 to 5.22 would benefit from being updated to reflect the latest position set out in this Joint Statement for the LNP.

### **Housing needs/mix – Policy H2**

The assessment of housing needs and for the LNP is based on a robust evidence base. The outline planning application that we have submitted for SA 3 has been developed to show how a range of detached and semi-detached houses, bungalows and apartments, including both market and affordable homes can be provided in the development. The indicative housing mix shown in the application is generally in accordance with Policy H2 to demonstrate that the LNP's requirements can be accommodated within development proposals for the proposed new housing sites.

### **Policy H3: Residential Density and Design**

The approach to density and design as set out in Policy H3 is supported. We consider that it is correct that the LNP is not over prescriptive and the objective is to ensure that new development is in keeping with the locality in which it is proposed. The planning application that we have submitted for St Margaret's Crescent illustrates how this can be achieved.

### **Chapter 6 – Residential and Commercial Site Allocations**

We support the LNP's recognition that Leiston town is identified to accommodate growth and the identification of the proposed allocation of Land to the rear of St Margaret's Crescent - for approximately 70 dwellings (Policy SA3). As indicated at paragraphs 6.9- 6.10 the site was appropriately selected as being available, suitable and achievable and has been subject to consultation as part of the LNP process. In addition our planning application has followed an extensive engagement exercise with the local community, including a 2 day public exhibition and meetings with the Town Council. There is general support for the allocation of the site and its development from the local community and the Town Council.

### **Land to the rear of St Margaret's Crescent- Policy SA3**

As indicated above, we support the proposed allocation of SA3 for residential development. Our planning application relates to that part of the site shown on the plan at page 35 excluding the area as shown for Green Open Space to the west. It totals 3.3 hectares in size and proposes up to 77 homes with supporting infrastructure and open space. The supporting illustrative layout plan with the application accompanies these representations.

As indicated on that plan, our planning application demonstrates that we will be able to comply with the criteria set out in the policy in the following respects:

- the design ensures that development is set well back from the southern boundary of the site in order to protect the amenity of existing residents in St Margaret's Crescent.
- the development ensures that the amenity of residential properties is protected from the commercial activity at the adjacent Masterlord Industrial Estate.
- the application does not affect the retention of the existing playing fields on the western part of the allocated site.
- the application makes provision for 0.5 hectares of an attractive community garden based around the protected trees in the centre of the site as part of the proposal.
- the application provides detailed information and proposals for sustainable drainage systems.
- the scheme makes allowance for the improvement of the existing adjacent public right of way on the eastern site boundary.
- the scheme provides for the introduction of landscaping on the southern boundary of the site to screen development from the existing properties on St Margaret's Crescent.

- The scheme provides for appropriate vehicle access into the site with necessary highway improvements to Margaret's Crescent. The detailed transport work submitted with the application, and discussions with Suffolk County Highways, have identified that there is no need to carry out improvements to the junction between St Margaret's Crescent and the B1119 (Waterloo Avenue).

The only minor variation between Policy SA3 as drafted and the scheme put forward in the planning application is that it does not include the provision of a vehicular accessway along the southern boundary of the site to serve the rear of all of the existing properties on St Margaret's Crescent. However, it should be noted that the proposed policy indicates that its provision is dependent on it being possible and agreed by all affected residents.

It was clear from the feedback from the community engagement exercise as part of the planning application that there is a preference for a pedestrian (as opposed to vehicular) accessway. The planning application includes a Statement of Community Consultation which makes specific reference to this matter. Only two out of the 14 properties that an accessway could potentially serve expressed a preference for a vehicular accessway. The illustrative layout that forms part of the outline application has incorporated this feedback. It makes provision for a possible vehicular access to the rear of those two properties that have expressed support for vehicular access with a pedestrian accessway serving the remainder of the properties.

In the light of this work we have been able to establish that not all residents require provision and we recommend that Policy SA3 should therefore be updated. Our suggested amendment to criterion 7 of the policy is therefore as follows:

*If possible and agreed by all affected residents, the provision of a pedestrian accessway along the southern boundary of the site shall be provided to serve the rear of the existing properties on St Margaret's Crescent. Consideration should be given to the provision of a vehicular access to individual properties where this is proved necessary, deliverable and fully supported by the households that require such provision.*

We consider that the above changes will ensure that the LNP is consistent with both national policies and strategic policies contained within the development plan that seek to protect residential amenity, to ensure that the LNP satisfies the basic conditions tests as out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



We trust these comments are helpful to Leiston Town Council, and in due course, to the Independent Examiner. If any of the above matters require clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

As indicated by SCDC we request to be kept notified on SCDC's decision under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 on the Examiners' recommendations and future progress with the LNP.

Yours sincerely,

**Andy Butcher**  
Associate Partner  
Strutt & Parker LLP