

Andrew Sterling

pianist, composer, band and ensemble leader

Gareth Durrant
Principal Development Control Officer
Babergh District Council
Corks Lane
Hadleigh
Ipswich
IP7 6SJ

May 13th 2009

Dear Mr Durrant,

Application No: B/00/01318/RES, Reference GANGES/AA/AD
Former HMS Ganges Site, Shotley Gate, Shotley, Ipswich, IP9

Dear Mr Durrant,

This is to quote Suffolk Coast and Heaths:

'Of the five Suffolk estuaries, the Stour and Orwell are subject to the most human pressure. The presence of the ports at Felixstowe, Harwich and Ipswich mean there is more commercial usage and development here than on the other Suffolk rivers. Because of their proximity to Ipswich the estuaries are also popular for a wide range of recreational activities including walking, bird watching and sailing.

These pressures can adversely affect the estuaries' internationally important wildlife and damage the habitats they depend on.

.....In 1996, the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Group produced a non-statutory Management Plan. This contained a series of suggestions for actions by organisations and individuals with an interest in the estuaries in order to:

"Promote the sustainable use of the Stour and Orwell estuaries through the management of human activity, in a way which is compatible with the conservation of the estuarine ecosystem." `

The more people there are on the peninsula the greater these pressures, because every person who visits has a reach as never before, through activity made possible by modern technologies, to have a huge impact on the environment.

So if the 'visits' become permanent - ie resident - then those impacts become permanently high, albeit, of course, variable within that higher threshold. And as retired people like to walk, sail and bird watch - all of which this area is so prone to - with such a massive *permanent* increase of such a population, what is expected not to be the outcome? As such residents normally have higher than normal levels of their own visitors who will be wanting to also explore the area with them I expect the place to be regularly overrun and eroded. However, maybe these 'retirement' houses are for the over 50's or might be sold on to similar, or non-retired buyers, in which case the impact would be from even more active families, and with even more cars.

Additionally, it is at last a recognised (and ironical) problem that the more the pressures on wildlife, the more managed it is, the more it is fenced off, pocketed and isolated from other such areas, thus often acting as a wildlife 'prisons' with little inherent flow between such areas - which wildlife inherently requires. This then becomes an additional pressure on the ailing ecosystem, locally and generally.

So it has to be faced that if government, including local government, is to take its role seriously in protecting wildlife then it's the pressures themselves that should be lessened - not increased then 'managed' at a much higher, therefore inherently destructive, level.

So, allowing in a developer, with its own tunnel-visioned money-making interests, only to supposedly then wildlife interests (in effect) is a box-ticking contradiction in terms under statutory requirements. (Ramsar and EU Birds Directive, together with the EU Habitats Directive, transposed into UK law in 1994 as the UK Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations (1994) in which the Stour and Orwell estuaries were designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and, because the new SPA included areas that were intertidal or wholly

marine, also termed a European Marine Site). Development and wildlife interests at Ganges are polar opposites, whatever remedial, superficial measures are taken to show willing.

ANOBs

I provide the following extract of the SEA Scoping report. regarding AONBs:

Objectives

The following table of objectives has been developed to reflect environmental matters relevant to the AONB and will be used to assess the likely impacts of the AONB Management Plan objectives. They have been chosen to purely represent environmental concerns and are written to reflect that in an environment assessment there is a need to explore whether the AONB Plan objectives create adverse impacts on the fundamental elements of the topic. The AONB Plan will however consider wider sustainability issues and will normally seek to take a more active approach in conserving and/ or enhancing prime topics.

To safeguard the landscape

To safeguard habitats, fauna and flora

To safeguard areas of historical, archaeological and cultural importance

To safeguard the environmental quality of land, air and water resources through the use of sustainable practices

To minimise waste and through re-use, re-cycling and recovery reduce the use of landfill

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage sustainable forms of energy production

To promote sustainable flood risk management

To safeguard human health

To avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the cumulative effect of the above

d. Table of prime environmental issues

Issues	Impacts	Possible indicators to measure change over time
Sea level rise	Coast and estuarine impacts on landscape, biodiversity, heritage, properties, land use, water resources, recreation/access, tourism, transport, communities and quality of life	Number of occasions sea/ estuarine defences overtopped; Number of schemes of managed realignment and area of habitat created

Farming	Landscape, land cover, biodiversity, heritage, water resources, recreation and access, tourism, climate and communities	Percentage of AONB in arable production and under grazing; Level of water abstraction; Number and area of land in agri-environment schemes
Energy production & use	Landscape, (biodiversity), land use, climate and quality of life	Number and capacity of new power generation developments through the planning system and how that power is generated;
Development (primarily housing & diversification)	Landscape, biodiversity, heritage, water resources, recreation/access, tourism, communities, climate and quality of life	Number of new houses and number of dwellings per area inside AONB and outside (by district); Number of diversification schemes given grant aid;
Climate change	Landscape, biodiversity, land use, water resources, communities and quality of life	Position of average isotherms across the county;
Water resources	Landscape, biodiversity, (heritage), land use, communities and quality of life	Level of water abstraction; Water quality of rivers;

(end of extract)

Any proposed housing development at Ganges will not safeguard the quality of land, air and water, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage sustainable forms of energy production, safeguard human health and 'avoid any significant adverse impacts created by the cumulative effect of the above' - **simply because the site is a dead-end at the end of a one main, narrow, access road** (the B1456 - a 'B' road, note).

This is the reason why the inspectorate - and the government - threw it out, and no shifting of deck chairs (whether 'for' wildlife, traffic or for placating the residents), has, or will ever, change this. The matter is settled. As has been established by residents, the Inspectorate and the Government, the site is entirely inappropriate for more population/housing of any sort: the road runs through villages, such as Chelmondiston where I live, Woolverstone (itself a Conservation Area) and Wherstead strand, all of which are already suffering from streams of traffic and subsequent fumes, noise and vibration (due to previous inappropriate levels of housing development) and which road has been shown to be at near or at its peak capacity.

Therefore any consideration of suitability of the number of new houses and dwellings 'inside AONB and outside', or of communities, climate and quality of life is already a big issue. It is already hardly bearable. My dwelling is at one of the 'pinch points, where traffic bunches up, eight feet from my front windows. It hugely impacts on both my personal and professional life (working from home). To increase the traffic to the extent that each additional household can have 2 or more cars is simply frightening and depressing. Quality of life issues would be out of the window.

The council should put its emphasis on these real interests, those of the quality of life and environment, of the wildlife - all of which it is responsible for, and stop backing (which it did shamefully (at what and whose cost?..... in the Public Inquiry) and indeed think in terms of 'energy production and use', an idea I have regularly put forward.

Local energy farms are increasingly seen as the answer to the gathering energy crisis - what with peak oil and climate change - and the Ganges site is ideal for a multi-faceted energy farm, of which there many up and down the country. Such an idea would indeed inherently radically reduce the pressures on wildlife and doubly so on greenhouse gas emissions (no extra housing, no extra vehicles).

The Council should reject this application and all associated applications and instead ask any company who wants to invest in that land to come up with something suitable. Or it could be community-owned indeed; local energy production schemes often are. Encourage the current owners to think communally and responsibly.

The problem is, of course, that vital forward-thinking is up against the received standard, short-term parameters of thinking that regularly pervade development issues. I hope, though, Babergh can show it is beginning to make the necessary changes in outlook by rejecting this application.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Sterling

cc Councillor Penny Clarke, Councillor Tony Roberts, Councillor David Wood