

# New homes in danger of overloading village

## Inquiry told Clare should grow at slower rate

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**An inquiry into a major planning policy document was told that building up to 150 homes on the edge of Clare would not be right.**

The construction of between 130 and 150 homes on land at Poslingford Corner is one of two schemes not included in a planning document put together by St Edmundsbury Borough Council to shape housing provision up to 2031.

Sixty new homes already under construction on land east of The Granary, the proposed development at Poslingford Corner, plus schemes for 64 homes next to Stour Valley Community School in Cavendish Road and 75 dwellings in Back Field, off Nethergate Street, all came under scrutiny at a hearing last week.

Planning inspector Roger Clews, who has been appointed by the Government to examine whether the plan is "fit for purpose", asked Brian Flynn, representing property consultants Januarys, why he should consider the proposed Cavendish Road and Poslingford Corner developments.

Mr Flynn said: "There are no constraints to the site and there is an affordable housing need."

His response was questioned by borough council planning officer Anne-Marie Howell, who said no evidence of landscaping had been produced to justify 150 homes when the council would like to see no more than 140 on the site.

She added: "We think there are better places in the village for developments."



PICTURE: FREE PRESS ARCHIVE

**ATA CROSSROADS:** Keith Haisman said any plans must focus on sustainability.

Mrs Howell's views were supported by Clare Town Council chairman Keith Haisman, who said: "Not only is it right on the periphery but the access coming out of the existing small industrial estate is dangerous."

Should all four housing developments flagged up at the inquiry go ahead, it would see as many as 349 homes built in Clare over the next 17 years, which raised further questions from Mrs Howell.

She said: "It could mean another 750 people in Clare over the planning period."

"That's a higher rate of growth than proposed in Bury St Edmunds."

She went on to say: "We don't want to overload a village that has constraints and planning issues."

Among the allocations included in the plan's proposals was for half-a-hectare of land

in Chilton Street to be available for development as an employment site.

Mr Haisman expressed his concerns about the proposal, saying: "I see no need for it. On Bridewell Street, there is already an industrial site which has vacant units."

"There is no demand and we are not looking for light industrial units in Clare."

The need to preserve the character of Clare and protect its heritage and history was also emphasised by Clare Society member Bridgett Burgess.

She said: "The atmosphere in our town is terrific. If we are going to add more houses, I think it should be gently increased."

"It's terribly important that the planning is sympathetic to the atmosphere of the whole town."

A long debate was also

held over proposals to build 75 homes in Back Field, although Mr Haisman told the inquiry that figure had now been revised to between 50 and 60 houses.

English Heritage representative David Eves raised fears over the impact of the development, on the conservation area in which it falls.

In response, Mr Haisman said: "This is the only site that meets the vision's criteria of sustainability."

"This is about creating the heritage of tomorrow in a sustainable way while damaging as little as possible."

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