

DC/21/2503/OUT – Land South of Forge Close, Benhall

Consultation on revised Access proposals: October 2024

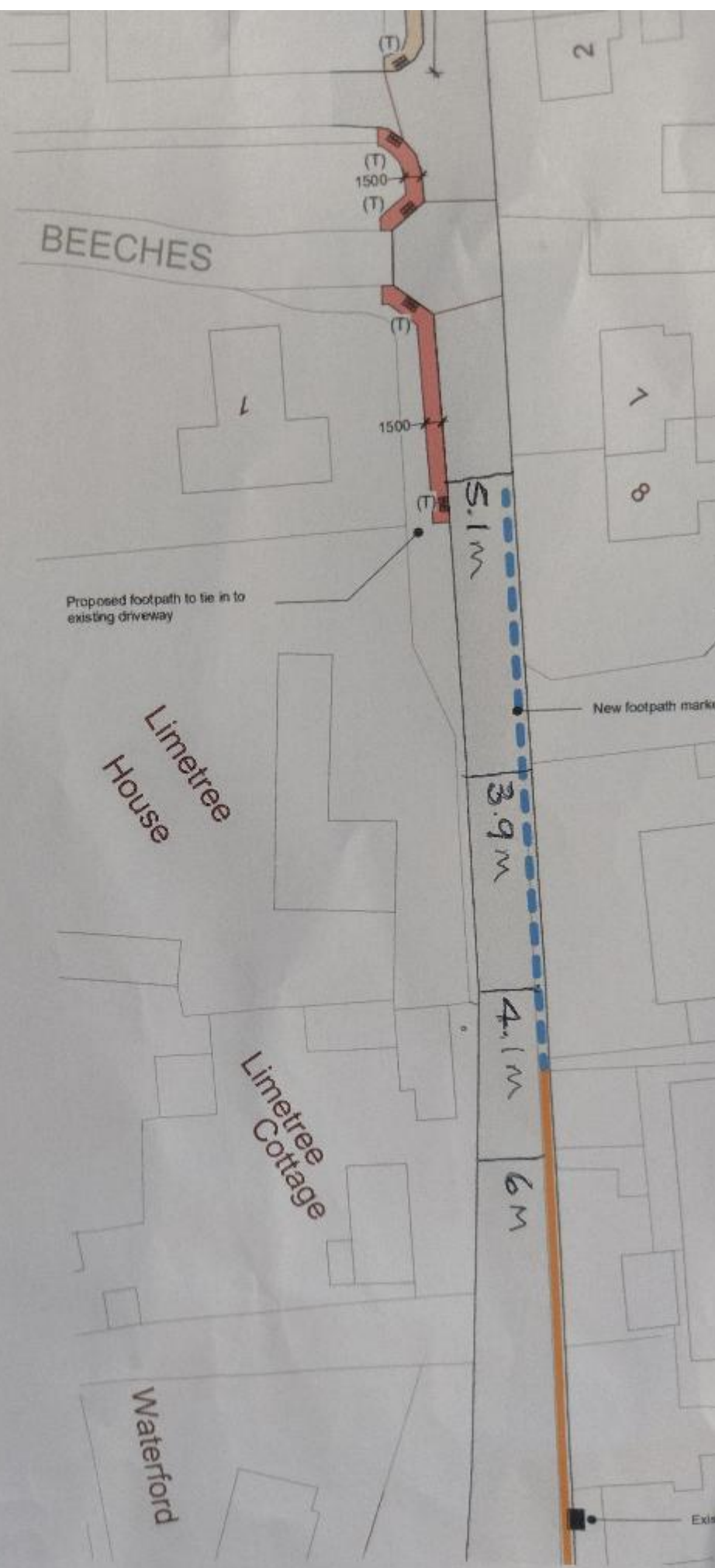
Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council

Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council **OBJECT** to these revised Access proposals. They do not accord with the appropriate Local Plan Policies.

1. **Policy SCLP12.43** says that the development will be expected to accord with the following criteria: g) Enhanced pedestrian permeability and cycle access will be required.

Comments: the revised access proposed by the Applicant does not come near to meeting these criteria for the following reasons:

- a) It has reduced the pedestrian permeability from that proposed in August 2023 by leaving footpath 26 as a footpath. It should be upgraded to a surfaced bridleway as shown on those plans and this bridleway should be extended into Mill Lane ie a fully surfaced bridleway for the full length from the B1121 bridge to Mill Lane. This is the only way to meet these criteria.
- b) The route on the latest proposal does provide 'access' to Benhall but in no way enhances permeability. And we are unconvinced about the safety, particularly where the dashed lines are proposed: this road is already a narrow (single car width on occasions) 30mph route to the school and the Benhall Club. It becomes very busy several times a day. The use of dashed lines further narrows the road. Note that buses and sewage tankers also use this route. It may be acceptable as an optional route from this development. It is not acceptable as the only route. Whilst we do not support the white lined pedestrian route from the site to Forge Close, it must be included, but aligned back from the road. See photo below which clearly shows how narrow this road is: dashed lines 1.5 m from the verge leave only 2.4m of roadway at the narrowest point. There is a danger to cyclists, walkers, wheelers at the narrowest sections.



BEECHES

Proposed footpath to tie in to existing driveway

Limetree House

Limetree Cottage

Waterford

5.1m

3.9m

4.1m

6m

New footpath mark

Existing

2. **Policy SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport**

Development proposals should be designed from the outset to incorporate measures that will encourage people to travel using non-car modes to access home, school, employment, services and facilities. Development will be supported where:

- a) Any significant impacts on the highways network are mitigated;
- b) It is proportionate in scale to the existing transport network;
- c) All available opportunities to enable and support travel on foot, by cycle or public transport have been considered and taken;
- d) It is located close to, and provides safe pedestrian and cycle access to services and facilities;
- e) It is well integrated into and enhances the existing cycle network including the safe design and layout of new cycle routes and provision of covered, secure cycle parking;
- f) It is well integrated into, protects and enhances the existing pedestrian routes and the public rights of way network;
- g) It reduces conflict between users of the transport network including pedestrians, cyclists, users of mobility vehicles and drivers and does not reduce road safety; and
- h) The cumulative impact of new development will not create severe impacts on the existing transport network.

Comments: the revised access proposed by the Applicant does not come near to meeting these criteria.

This development needs to reinstate the upgrade of footpath 26 to a surfaced bridleway, and a continuation to Mill Lane.

Both the pedestrian/cycling/walking/wheeling routes need to have maintenance agreements to ensure they are usable year round.

Please note that Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council have already showed goodwill by a) paying towards the repair of the footway opposite the development – which otherwise would probably have been a cost to this development.

In addition, Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council are working with ESC Cycling/Walking/Wheeling Working Group to create a CWW route between Benhall and Saxmundham. This route is the Group's Flagship project and the first stage, in School Lane is due to be installed by the end of 2024. It is therefore clearly in the interests of this development to create the equivalent quality of surfaced bridleway to link as closely as possible to this new route. We note that there is an expectation that 40% of the homes will be accessible and Section 106 expects schoolchildren. As a result the access routes to and from this development must be designed to be safe for wheelchair users, mobility vehicles, prams etc.

We would also add that there is a strong likelihood of a major increase in traffic, notably HGVs -along the B1121 in front of the development – if the access road for the National Grid

converter stations is built off the B1121. This should be considered when looking at the safety not just of pedestrians, cyclists and other users but also car drivers.

Additional access issue:

The addition of a field gate implies that the farmer is expecting to manoeuvre farm vehicles through the roads of this new development. If this is needed in order to access the Highway, a full separate Planning Application should be made specifically for this usage.