

Date: 13th October 2014
Enquiries to: Robert Feakes

Hilary Hanslip
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Melton Hill,
Woodbridge,
Suffolk
IP12 1AU

Dear Mrs Hanslip,

Draft Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for consulting Suffolk County Council on the submission version of Rendlesham's Neighbourhood Plan.

The County Council welcomes Rendlesham's positive and proactive approach to localism and sustainable development, and the parish council should be commended for their efforts in producing the Plan. **Suffolk County Council has no objection to the Plan as drafted, in respect of the Basic Conditions.** A small number of minor amendments, which relate to County Council service responsibilities and policy objectives, are proposed and are set out below.

Education

The recognition given to school and early years provision is welcomed.

Children's Centre

Appendix G makes reference to the Children's Centre. The County Council has no plans or funding for increasing the Centre's physical capacity. There is an effective relationship between the Centre and the School which enables sharing of facilities, though the Parish Council's commitment to consider funding additional provision through their share of any CIL receipts which may be forthcoming is welcomed.

Libraries

Paragraph 9.12 and Appendix G notes the issue of library provision, and suggests that a new fixed service point could be provided if space in a building were available and if developer contributions were forthcoming. This refers to Suffolk County Council's letter to the Parish Council, dated 21st May 2014. That letter was predicated on the level of growth set out in a previous iteration of the Plan, which would have justified such provision. This version of the plan does not promote housing, although it does not preclude it either.

The County Council will consider the need for library services based upon the level of housing growth brought forward in future planning documents.

Transport

The County Council as Highways Authority does not object to this Plan. The reference to countywide parking standards, in paragraph 11.17, is particularly welcome. However, several minor amendments are proposed.

Paragraph 11.22 makes reference to shared space. Shared space has a particular meaning in highway design terms and, based on the context of this paragraph and the reference to Acer Road, it is assumed that 'shared use' is what is actually meant.

Shared space eliminates all demarcations between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, with the intention that this increases awareness between users and thus safety. Shared use is more appropriate terminology for a distinct pedestrian and cycle lane, shared between those modes of transport, physically separated from vehicular traffic, as per Acer Road.

Objectives 6 and 6a both refer to an objective of minimisation of traffic. Whilst national and local (district) policy seeks to prioritise sustainable modes of transport, the Parish Council should be aware that it is not possible to minimise traffic impacts. In seeking to implement this objective, the Highways Authority and Local Planning Authority will only be able to require the prioritisation of sustainable modes and will not be able to refuse permission for development unless impacts are 'severe'.

Paragraph 14.05 makes reference to hazards in the highway network. Highway safety is a priority in assessing the highway implications of development. Whether or not a junction is hazardous can only be defined through accident records first, followed by an assessment of the implications of additional growth. The junctions to be assessed are dependent on the scale and location of development, considered against the likely volumes of vehicle movements in specific directions.

Paragraph 14.09 is unclear as regards what is meant by 'positive traffic flow'. It is recommended that this paragraph is deleted, given that it is open to misunderstanding.

I hope that these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely,

James Cutting
Planning Strategy Manager
Economy, Skills and Environment Manager