

25 January 2017

Attn Mrs H Hanslip  
Planning Policy and Delivery Team (Neighbourhood Plans)  
Suffolk Coastal District Council  
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Riduna Park  
Station Road  
Melton  
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Dear Mrs Hanslip,

### **Melton Neighbourhood Plan**

I am writing to offer my comments on the proposed Melton Neighbourhood Plan. I request to be notified of the District Council's decision as to whether to accept the examiners' recommendation and future progress of the plan.

It is clear that extensive work has gone into this Plan, which includes much sensible analysis and some good policies. The parish councillors and others who have supported this work should be thanked and commended.

I wish to offer the following comments for consideration.

#### Para 5.16 Melton Road and Policy MEL2: Dedicated access for cyclists and pedestrians

I support all the proposals in this Policy, and in particular agree that the provision of the cyclepaths/footpaths is required. In addition to the cyclepaths proposed, I suggest that further consideration is given to a cyclepath along Melton Road to Woodbridge. The existing road is wide, and is certainly safer to cycle than Woods Lane and the Wilford Bridge Road, but the many parked cars present a hazard for cyclists, especially children. I know that it was suggested during the consultation that it would be desirable to link the proposed cyclepaths from Woods Lane into Woodbridge itself. This would also provide a cycle route from the Saxon Way residential area to Melton Primary School and the village centre and onwards to the railway station. Given that the timeframe of the Neighbourhood Plan extends to 2030, it appears unambitious not to include this link.

#### Paras 6.5 to 6.13 and Policy MEL9: Provision of community facilities at the playing fields, Melton Road

I served for some years as a trustee of a modern village hall in a large village near Stowmarket, with facilities of a similar scale to those proposed

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in this policy. It was a constant struggle to cover the maintenance costs of the building, which required ongoing subsidies from the parish and community councils (ie from council tax payers).

While I agree that there is scope for providing improved community facilities at the playing fields, together with some additional parking spaces, I believe that the development proposed in these sections and policy is far too large. I believe that it would have a significantly detrimental impact upon the playing fields and their setting, requiring too large a “land take” and therefore contradicting Policy MEL12 which designates the Playing Fields as a Local Green Space. I also object specifically to the wording of the policy which only requires the retention of protected trees “where possible”, whereas I believe it should be mandatory to retain any protected trees.

I further believe that the Melton area is already well-served by several larger halls, including Woodbridge Community Centre, and that the proposed Melton Village Hall would struggle to attract sufficient bookings to justify the proposed size. I would potentially be supportive of a smaller scale centre with a much reduced parking capacity, but as a council tax payer I feel unable to support the Neighbourhood Plan while it includes the Policy as currently stated.

#### Paras 7.1, 7.8 and Policy MEL12: Protection and maintenance of Local Green Spaces

While in Figure 2.1, the Playing Fields are marked as a contiguous green space with the Woodland (Burkes Woods / Leek’s Hill Woods), only the Playing Fields themselves are proposed to be designated by this Policy.

While the woodland is already subject to a Tree Preservation Order, and while it is included in Policy MEL17: Areas to be protected from development, I suggest that the woodland should also be protected as a Local Green Space. The woodland is clearly valued very highly by the community for its recreational value by walkers and others. It appears inconsistent not to include it alongside the Playing Fields and the similar setting of Hospital Grove woodland at Melton Park. The bluebell woods were lost to housing development because they were not properly protected: it would be a crime to lose what is left in the coming years.

I hope that you will find these comments helpful and that they will be of use to make the final version of the Plan even better. Thank you again to all involved.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Steventon-Barnes BSc MSc MBA CEng CMgr MIET FCMI