

Melton Neighbourhood Plan

Carter Warburgh Proposal (CWP): Sustainability and Climate Change

Our organisation is extremely concerned that many of today's Councils are failing to recognise the importance of Climate Change and its possible severe and often unpredictable impacts when considering future development proposals, and in many cases ignore Climate Change altogether; assuming perhaps, that its impact is for future generations to deal with.

The Melton Neighbourhood Plan for instance falls into this category and fails to even mention Climate Change ONCE which is disappointing to say the very least. Surely the backbone of any sustainable development is about positive growth; making economic, environmental and social progress for this AND future generations; Climate Change is a huge threat to our very future existence.

This attitude from ill informed decision makers is not helpful to us now, or indeed future generations, Climate Change is here NOW and what's more it is here TO STAY and alarmingly; its frequency of damaging effects is increasing at an EXPONENTIAL RATE EACH YEAR and quite simply can NOT be ignored any longer.

A n Example for us ALL: Ignore Climate Change at Your Peril

Lowestoft, our near neighbours as a case in point, having suffered from both major Tidal Surge events and heavy rainfall flooding in almost every year since 2013, which is unprecedented; with the most damaging events occurring in December 2013, October 2016 and January 2017. The realisation that they are in such an extremely vulnerable position, that the existing defences are simply not sufficient in terms of condition or height and that these inadequacies will continue to pose significant threats to businesses, private property and the very lives of the Community themselves; has finally hit home.

http://www.lowestoftfrmp.org.uk/media/1050/consultation_lowestoft.pdf

They are now at the very earliest stage of trying to combat an enormous man made problem again disappointing, when the evidence of Climate Change has been with us for decades, the decision makers who have done little to protect the people of Lowestoft from Climate Change effects and after allowing new development in Floodplains; of course no doubt proclaim " it's not our fault, its Climate Change we could not of seen this".

How wrong are they now! The evidence was there many years ago, as it is today and the preponderance to ignore Climate Change now threatens the very survival of large areas of the Town. The funding for adequate defences is likely to be in excess of fifty million pounds (£50 million) and can only be part funded by Government if at all; so it is likely that at least £20 million to £30 million will need funding from elsewhere which will take years to realise and as a result it is very likely that abandonment of businesses and homes will occur in the mean time; since many will become uninsurable as a result of further inevitable future flooding events..

Could the Same Occur Here? Yes it Can and Here is Why:

Recent notable Tidal flooding occurred in the River Deben in January 2017 and the December 2013 event where the sea water stopped short of the top of the tidal defence walls in Woodbridge and Melton by just 50 cm (20 inches); fortunately this happened because after the Tidal Surge passed Lowestoft the associated deep depression then travelled in a more easterly direction towards Scandinavia thus reducing the impact of the Tidal Surge here.

The ingredients of the largest Tidal Surges in this region are, a strong north/north easterly airflow, a deep depression travelling down the east coast from Scotland that reaches far down into the southern North Sea and the highest spring tides occurring at the same time. We now know, without question, that Climate Change will bring with it a greater number of severe winter storm events; it follows that the chances of these ingredients lining up is much more likely as each year passes with multiple events of Tidal Surge possible.

Couple this with sea level rise (currently at approximately 0.5cm/year and increasing each year mainly due to glacier and polar ice cap melt) and our final ingredient gives us the complete recipe for disaster. That 50 cm safety net we had at the last Tidal Surge in December 2013 starts to look very shaky indeed, particularly when you factor in such things as during a storm for instance, just a 10mb fall in pressure will result in a 10 cm rise in sea levels; storm force northerly winds with an associated deep depression continuing further down past the Suffolk coast into Essex and Kent could easily drive the sea levels up a further 40 to 60cm and overtopping or breaching of our inadequate existing defences WILL occur.

Furthermore it is very possible that this scenario could happen sooner rather than later, although our predictions are indeed within the next 2 to 5 years, for a major Tidal Surge event that may well occur in this area; with disastrous consequences.

Fact: The Carter Warburgh Proposal site left undeveloped will reduce flooding elsewhere:

It is so vitally important that the floodplain is retained, because the CWP site in its undeveloped low lying ground state, as it is now; would help in any Tidal Surge or heavy rainfall event acting as a large flood storage area and reduce flooding elsewhere particularly to the new SCDC Offices just yards away. These new Offices are currently in a very vulnerable position with flooding in excess of 1.5 metres to the ground floor very possible. Left undeveloped the CWP site provides significant flood storage capacity in a flooding event, which may prevent or alleviate inundation to the Offices themselves and also reduce velocities of dangerous flood waters adjacent to the Riduna Park Development itself.

Summary: Development in the Floodplain Is Unsustainable and Must Be Prohibited; the Carter Warburgh Proposal must be Withdrawn From the Melton Neighbourhood Plan

Climate change is happening RIGHT NOW and our existing inadequate tidal defences, like those of Lowestoft will have difficulty in withstanding significant future Tidal Surge events which are becoming increasingly more frequent.

The Carter Warburgh Proposal positioned behind poorly defended tidal defence walls, would become unsustainable in a very short period of time and the impact of the loss of flood storage, in a Tidal Surge event, to nearby properties, road, rail and other infrastructure would be hugely detrimental. For these reasons the Carter Warburg proposal site should be removed and other sites on higher contoured areas should be explored; these would be truly sustainable and NOT affected by the existing inadequate tidal defence structures.

A far better use for at least part of the Carter site would be for council staff parking since it is abundantly clear that the existing SCDC Offices fail to provide sufficient spaces; this would also have the benefit of retaining the essential flood storage volumes of the site.

Needless to say, that in the meantime, it is imperative that further development in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 must cease, to protect flood storage volumes which have been compromised by the past accumulative effects of developments in the floodplain. A robust strategy needs to be explored to fund and indeed implement, with as little delay as that funding will allow, new flood defences of sufficient height and structural integrity along the whole of the Woodbridge/Melton flood cell 13; to protect their Communities and infrastructure for a significantly longer duration than the existing defences can provide.

Please do NOT ignore Climate Change any longer, time is NOT on our side, act NOW, protect our remaining Floodplains and be proactive in your approach to the implementation of new flood defences; you do after all have a duty of care to the Community, don't you?

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Melton Against Development In Floodplains