

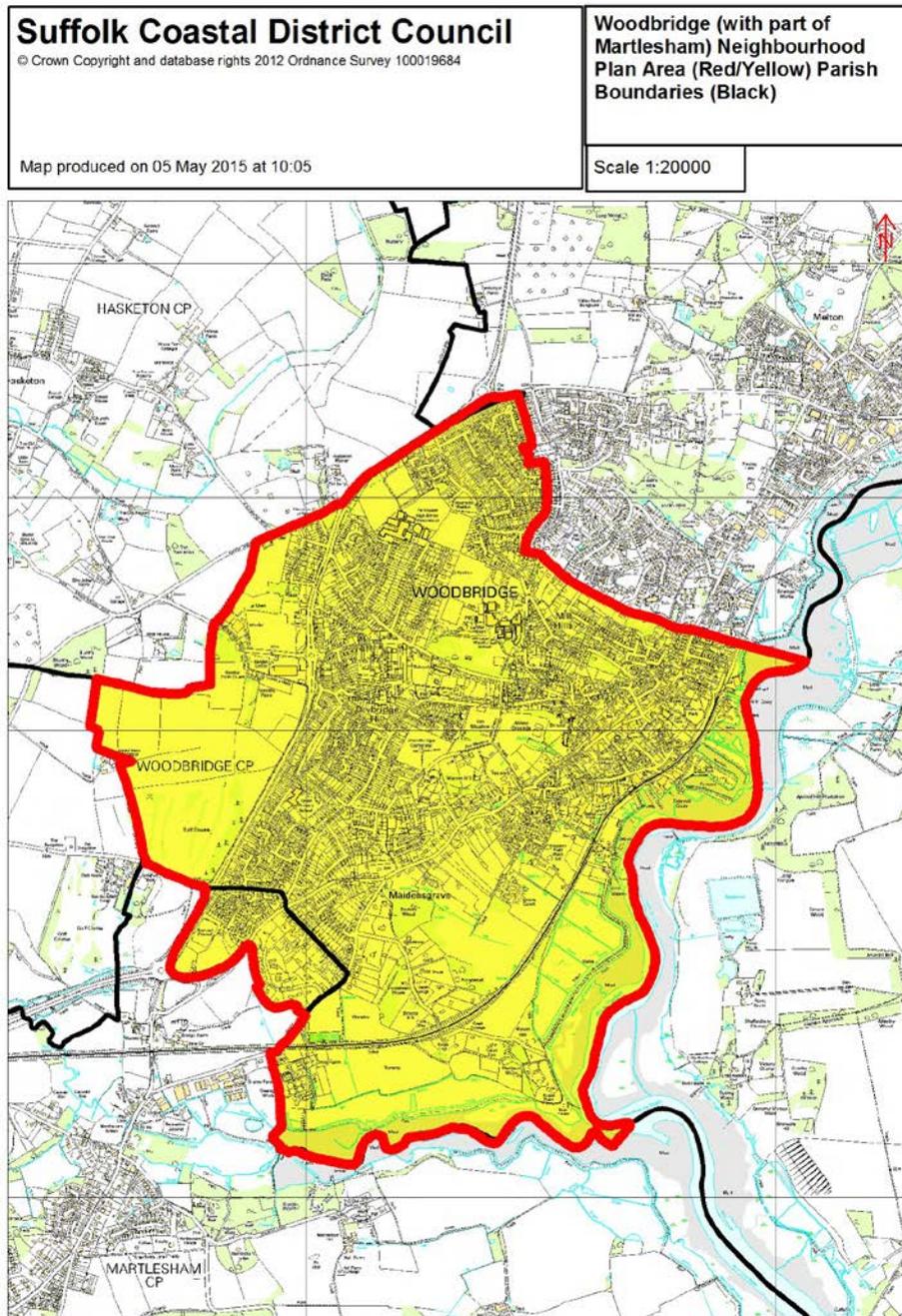
Suffolk Coastal District Council

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Neighbourhood Area Determination and Decision

Name of neighbourhood area	WOODBIDGE (with part of Martlesham)
Parish /Town Council	Woodbridge Town Council



The procedures governing the production of Neighbourhood Plans are set out in the [Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#) (as amended). The first formal stage in the Neighbourhood Plan process is the application by the “relevant body” to the Local Planning Authority for neighbourhood area designation (Part 2, paragraph 5). Additional guidance is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and in National Planning Practice Guidance – Neighbourhood Plans.

In accordance with the Regulations, the Local Planning Authority is required to publicise the neighbourhood area application (Part 2, paragraph 6) and to determine the application following consideration of representations received and to publicise its decision.

In determining an application the LPA must have regard to:

“The desirability of designating the whole of the area of a parish council as a neighbourhood area; and

The desirability of maintaining the existing boundaries of areas already designated as neighbourhood areas”

There is no requirement at this stage in the process for the applicant to state what issues it is intended that the Neighbourhood Plan would cover, only the geographic area to which the Neighbourhood Plan policies would apply.

DETERMINATION

1. Has the applicant fulfilled all the necessary requirements?

Yes. The Neighbourhood Area designation application has been submitted by Woodbridge Town Council who are the “relevant body” for the purposes of section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act for the Woodbridge Town Council administrative area. They will also act as “lead” authority for the preparation of the plan insofar as it relates to land within Martlesham parish. Martlesham Parish Council has given its formal agreement to this.

The application was accompanied by a map and statement identifying Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) as the area proposed to be designated and the reasons for that.

2. Has the application been properly advertised?

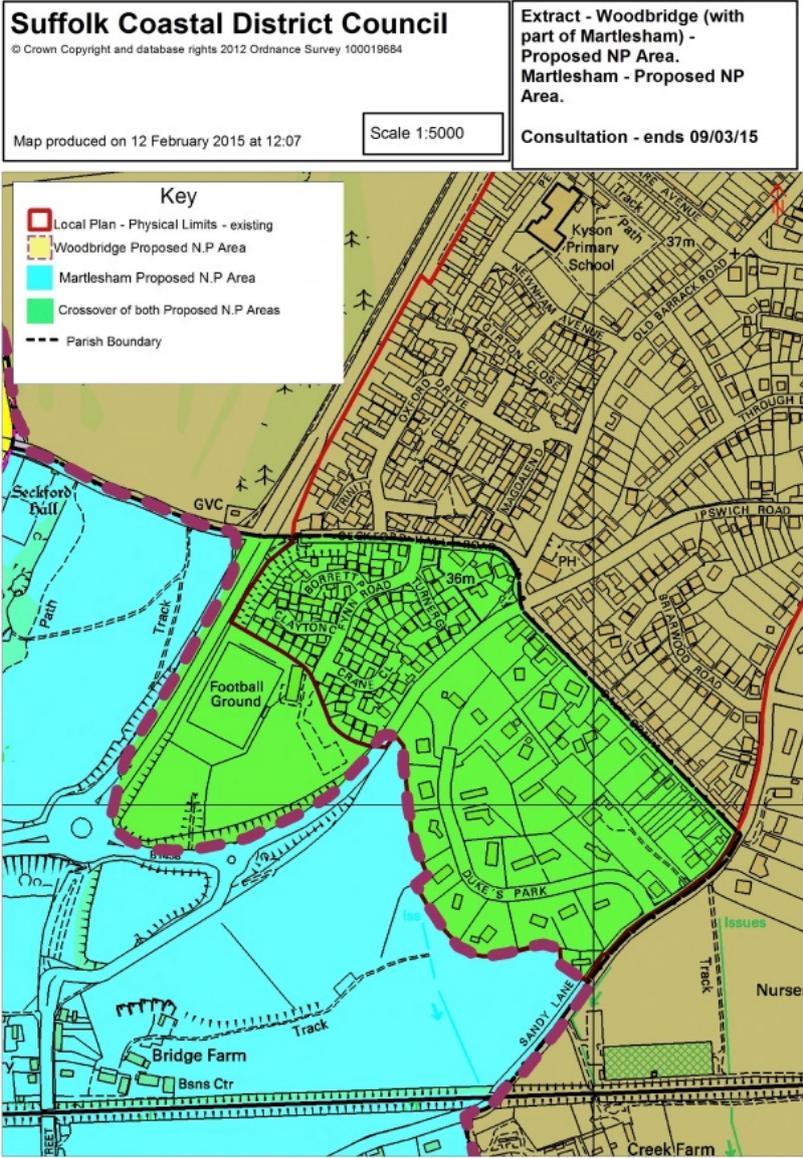
A copy of the application was placed on the Council’s website. Information provided included a copy of the application, details of how to make representations and the date by which representations should be received.

To bring the application to the wider attention of the people who live, work or carry on business in the area to which the application relates, a number of site notices were placed around the parish. A request was made to the Town Council to include details on their town council notice boards and in their parish newsletter.

Individual letters of notification were also sent to the local district and county council members; to neighbouring parish /town councils including Suffolk County Council and to statutory consultees.

Comments were invited over a six week period (26th January 2015 – 9th March 2015).

During the consultation period, additional letters were hand delivered by officers from Suffolk Coastal District Council to properties in that part of Martlesham parish which was proposed for inclusion in the Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) neighbourhood plan area (the cross over area). This was to draw their attention to the fact that their property was included within an area for which both Woodbridge Town Council and Martlesham Parish Council had submitted separate neighbourhood plan area applications and to enable them to express a preference for which neighbourhood area they would want to be included within. See map below.



3. What comments have been received?

A total of forty-seven (47) [comments](#) were received in response to the neighbourhood area applications for Woodbridge and for Martlesham and are available for viewing using the hyperlink provided. The comments are considered together because of the partial overlap (cross over area) between the two proposed neighbourhood areas.

Most comments received are from local residents living within the “cross over” area. Of these there is a majority in favour of the “cross over area” being included within Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) neighbourhood plan area and for the two councils involved to work together. These residents consider the area to be physically part of Woodbridge town and the area to which they relate for schools, health, shopping etc. A number of others commented that due to problems with deliveries, their postal address was formally changed from Martlesham to Woodbridge.

Of those objecting to inclusion within the Woodbridge neighbourhood plan, some consider they relate more readily to Martlesham and therefore the Martlesham proposal is more appropriate in their eyes. A further objection relates to a misconception that, by including the cross over area within the Woodbridge Neighbourhood Plan this would mean that they become part of the Woodbridge Town Council administrative area. This is not the case.

Of the other comments received, Martlesham Parish Council confirmed that provided there was evidence that the residents in the “cross over area” would prefer to be in the Woodbridge Neighbourhood Plan Area as submitted, they would have no objection to this. They confirm that they would look to work with Woodbridge Town Council for mutual agreement on any policies in their plan which would impact this area. They have since re-confirmed their agreement to this.

A number of comments were received specifically relating to Woodbridge Town Football ground site and possible future use, rather than in respect of the neighbourhood area proposal.

Two respondents suggested an alternative area for the Woodbridge Neighbourhood plan area. This suggestion was for it to be extended further to the south to take in land bounded by Sandy Lane, the railway line and Top Street. One considers that residents of this top half of Sandy Lane relate more to Woodbridge than to Martlesham. The other considers that the area in question provides an opportunity for Woodbridge to expand and would like it to be considered as a potential housing site through the plan making process.

Of the remaining respondents, Suffolk County Council has no stated preference regarding either neighbourhood area as submitted. They note that the most appropriate geographic coverage for a plan is, in large part, dependent on the topics it covers. One suggestion is to use primary school catchments as a proxy for functional areas at a scale similar to that of a parish. They welcome the opportunity to discuss proposals at an early stage whatever the determined neighbourhood plan area. They provide a list of service areas for which the County Council has responsibility.

Environment Agency has no stated preference regarding either neighbourhood plan area as submitted.

Neither Natural England nor English Heritage has any stated preference regarding either neighbourhood plan area as submitted. They both provide additional specific advice for each Parish / Town Council progress on matters that will need to be considered as the plans progress.

Comments received from David Lock Associates on behalf of BT and LondonMetric Property Plc are specific to the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan area proposal and are not relevant to

the consideration of the Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) neighbourhood plan area as submitted.

4. Are there any reasons why the application should not be permitted as submitted?

As noted above, the matters that the Council is required to take into consideration at this time are:-

“The desirability of designating the whole of the area of a parish council as a neighbourhood area; and

The desirability of maintaining the existing boundaries of areas already designated as neighbourhood areas”

The town of Woodbridge is defined for planning policy purposes in Core Strategy policy SP26 Woodbridge & paragraph 4.73 that notes:

“The town of Woodbridge is defined by its built up rather than administrative area, which extends into the parishes of Melton and Martlesham...”

The northern part of the built up area of the town falls within the parish of Melton. The parish of Melton was approved as a neighbourhood area in October 2013. The decision followed joint discussion with Melton Parish Council; Woodbridge Town Council and Martlesham Parish Council. It is understood that Melton Parish Council keep Woodbridge Town Council informed as to progress with their neighbourhood plan. There is no evidence to suggest that any amendment should, or needs to be considered to the Melton Neighbourhood plan area in response to the Woodbridge neighbourhood area application. Melton Parish Council made no comment in respect of the Woodbridge Town Council application. Maintaining the neighbourhood /administrative boundaries in this location is considered wholly appropriate.

The Woodbridge Town Council neighbourhood area proposal effectively covers the remainder of the built area for the town of Woodbridge as defined by the built up area boundary, plus the adjacent Woodbridge Town football ground which is physically limited in extent and operates visually and functionally with the townscape of Woodbridge. Outside of this area, the land is open and rural in character and sits at a lower level to the proposed neighbourhood area. In character it has more in keeping with the wider Martlesham parish area in this locality.

In land use planning terms, there is a clear logic for this “cross over area” being included as part of a Woodbridge neighbourhood plan both visually and functionally. The neighbourhood plan boundary will usefully and logically define the geographic extent to which Core Strategy policy SP26 – Woodbridge, will apply. From a social and community perspective, the comments received from residents in the “cross over” area in Martlesham parish showed a clear preference for inclusion within a Woodridge rather than Martlesham neighbourhood plan. Martlesham Parish Council also confirmed that in light of these residents’ comments, it would raise no objection to this part of its parish being included within a Woodbridge neighbourhood plan area. The effect of this would be to require an adjustment to the Martlesham neighbourhood plan area as submitted.

As noted in section 3 above, a couple of the comments received in response to the consultation as it applied to both Woodbridge and Martlesham neighbourhood area applications, put forward an alternative boundary for consideration. This would have seen the

Woodbridge neighbourhood area boundary extended southwards to include land bounded by Sandy Lane, the railway line and Top Street. One of the main reasons for the suggestion is that this area offers land for new housing over the plan period which for Woodbridge town is likely to be for 100 – 200 units.

At a joint meeting convened by the District Council to discuss the comments received, this alternative proposal was rejected by both Woodbridge and Martlesham parish /town council and neighbourhood team representatives. In particular, it was considered that whilst the railway provides a prominent visual boundary for residents and businesses in Sandy Lane, the same cannot be said for where the rail line crosses Top Street. Top Street is one of the oldest parts of Martlesham. The extended area proposed is predominantly rural does not have the same close functional and visual relationship to Woodbridge as the submitted neighbourhood plan area. In that sense, it is more logically included with the Martlesham neighbourhood area for which the Parish Council have submitted their neighbourhood area application. The views of both the Parish and Town Council therefore provide a clear steer with regard to this alternative suggestion.

Conclusion:

There are no valid planning reasons why Suffolk Coastal District Council should not designate the proposed neighbourhood area for Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) as submitted.

DECISION UNDER REGULATION 7 OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 2012

The application for the designation of Woodbridge (with part of Martlesham) is

APPROVED.



Cllr Geoff Holdcroft
Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Planning

Date: 05/05/2015