

MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL

RESPONSE TO PLANNING APPLICATION *S/2791/14/OL*

RECOMMENDATION

Melbourn Parish Council recommends that South Cambridgeshire District Council's Planning Committee **refuses** permission for planning application **S/2791/14/OL** submitted by Endurance Estates.

The grounds for this recommendation are as follows.

Generally,

- The site is located within the open 'countryside' in both the adopted and the emerging South Cambridgeshire local plans, where there is a general presumption against new development. Furthermore, the proposals are premature and would prejudice the emerging South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which is currently at Examination in Public.
- This is a speculative application and has been submitted at the same time as other large scale proposals are going through the planning system (notably in Barrington and Foxton). The impact of S/2791/14/OL must be assessed in that context because the other developments will also have an impact on Melbourn since it is a Minor Rural centre and provides services (for example, NHS facilities, shopping, pharmacy) for neighbouring communities.
- There is no plan to meet the changing infrastructure needs of unplanned population growth. In Melbourn the lack of planned infrastructure upgrade will result in traffic conflict and impact road safety, inadequate provision of early-years and primary education, an oversubscribed local surgery and the Parish Council contends, a sewerage system which cannot cope with the increased demand.

Melbourn Parish Council recognises that this is an application for outline planning permission only, and objects to the principle of being forced to consider a proposal which is likely to change beyond all recognition as the process proceeds.

Notwithstanding any case on five-year housing land supply, the proposals do not comply fully with the principles of 'sustainable development', as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In particular (the numbers are the relevant ones in the NPPF):

1. Building a strong, competitive economy

The proposal fails to include any business facilities except for a care home. Melbourn already has provision for the elderly in a care home and assisted living

apartments¹. However, Metropolitan Housing Association, the business which runs Southwell Court, has announced its intention to close the home because it does not have enough residents and is therefore not financially viable.

The National Planning Policy Framework states (p7) that plans should “support existing business sectors taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting.....”. The application fails on this criterion as it suggests only a business for which there is not a case of demonstrable need.

Local businesses themselves are ambivalent about the advantages of the additional 199 homes: 20% are in favour and 60% against, whilst 20% expressed no opinion.

3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy

In general the Transport Assessment fails to assess the capacity of local amenities (shops, restaurants and pubs) for additional use – any claims made are irrelevant if the amenity concerned cannot accommodate increased use.

Melbourn has a range of shops and services. Residents would welcome a wider choice. However, no provision is made for retail premises in the application and, indeed, given its position on the edge of the village, the viability of any such retail outlet must be open to question. In the centre of the village, where use would be guaranteed, there is little room for expansion by the current providers and parking would become an issue.

Furthermore, if the term ‘local services’ is interpreted to include schools and health, then this development would harm our community. At the current population, the village pre-schools, primary school, GP surgery and NHS dentist are all full to capacity. Adding an additional 199 homes would mean that residents will have to travel to other centres to obtain these services. With the current public transport service, people would have to use cars to access the services. This is not a sustainable option.

Harm to Melbourn will arise because residents will, in future, have to use their own vehicles to access a range of services such as a primary school and GP surgery because these facilities are already fully subscribed. This results in pollution and congestion.

The problem is exacerbated by further speculative applications for neighbouring population centres which share Melbourn’s facilities.

4. Promoting sustainable transport

The SCDC Village Classification Report 2012 scores Melbourn as 0 for public transport. The travel plan provided as part of the planning application does not address the fundamental issue that this development is on the outskirts of the village

¹ The care home is Southwell Court with 35 beds. Moorlands provides 35 apartments.

and people will use their cars to access the shops and facilities in the village, as well as being dependent on them for work and leisure travel.

As shown later in this report, the predominant travel culture in Melbourn is one of car use. The proposals made by the developer to encourage the use of walking/cycling/public transport are not supported by any evidence that they will change people's behaviour in the short, and certainly not in the long, term. Thus, the increase in traffic attributable to vehicles from 199 houses will exacerbate the congestion and safety problems already experienced.

In addition, there are two more fundamental objections to the transport assessment provided by the developer:

- The junction with New Road is in much too close proximity to junctions with developments on the other side of the road. This would result in significant problems with traffic flow along New Road.
- The modelling included in the transport assessment is deeply flawed because it makes unwarranted assumptions about traffic flow through the traffic lights at the centre of the village. If a more realistic model is used, it is obvious that the traffic lights will not be able to cope with the increased flow. The Parish Council can see no obvious way of overcoming this problem due to the constraints of the historic layout of the centre of the village.

The traffic modelling used to support the developer's application is flawed. It is assumed - without any justification presented - that the additional traffic generated will not follow existing use patterns. This omission has the advantageous impact (from the developer's point of view) on the junction model of removing a significant increase in the number of right turns at the junction.

This will cause considerable harm to life in the village, through congestion and delay, back-up of traffic to the Primary School and hence implications for road safety and impact on the businesses on The High Street because of interference with their deliveries.

6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

The NPPF clearly states that "...a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as..older people, people with disabilities...) is needed". The proposal includes a mix of housing including starter homes, but also 4 and 5 bedrooms properties. These are not what the village wants or needs for its healthy growth.

However there is **no** provision for bungalows or dwellings suitable for the 'free-living' elderly or disabled. This is despite people suggesting this need in the developer's own consultation. At the time of the Village Plan in 2010, 43% of Melbourn residents had lived in Melbourn for more than 21 years – we have to plan to accommodate longstanding residents in suitable housing as they grow older. A proper consultation

with the village would have helped Endurance Estates better understand local needs.

Sympathetic design needs to involve local residents so that homes can be provided which match the needs of the local population and environment. Harm ensues when residents are not consulted or listened to, and the homes provided suit the developer not village residents who have to live with the consequences.

7. Requiring good design

The NPPF states (para. 58) that the environment [should] not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion. This proposed development is located on the outskirts of the village with access only onto New Road despite there being an area of 10.9 hectares. It is essentially a gated community without the gates! Residents will be isolated – since they will have to get into their cars to access the village facilities because of distance or lack of local capacity in Melbourn, they will go elsewhere and not be part of the village community. This effect runs counter to the need to promote community cohesion.

Para. 66 states that “*Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by the proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community.*” This has not happened (as demonstrated in Section 7).

Melbourn Parish Council notes the following comment in the Planning Statement submitted by Endurance Estates (Appendix 2) which records the views of the SCDC design Enabling Panel:

“...potential to deliver a good scheme but further thought should be given to certain elements (especially in relation to the quality and character of both the central open space and linear green space and the integration/appropriateness of the design of the care home) to ensure the highest possible design quality is achieved across the development.”

How is this being addressed?

8. Promoting healthy communities

Paragraph 69 bullet 1 of the NFFP touches on the need to provide opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other. As noted above this is an isolated development. The Design and Access statement makes much of providing an area of open space at the edge of the development. It overlooks the fact that there is already a play space, recently totally refurbished through community action, a little way down New Road, closer to the village. **Why will local people go to the development?**

10. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

The application's consideration of different renewable energy options is brief, poorly assessed and badly complied.

Our consultant Hydrogeologist has commented that:

"This must mean that the applicant has not adequately considered the options, presumably because they want to limit those included to easy systems.."

The NPPF says in particular that:

"..local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources."

Melbourn Parish Council notes that, in particular, the application does not consider ground source heating which would be particularly suitable for social housing and the proposed Care Home. **Why not? And how does this omission chime with any SCDC policies to address fuel poverty?**

11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The NPPF says that 'valued landscapes' should be protected and enhanced (para. 109, 1st bullet). There is much text in the Design and Access Statement purporting to show that the landscape to the south of the village has no intrinsic value and that indeed the proposed development will enhance it. The residents of Melbourn contest this view. Farmland is in itself a landscape and, given that Melbourn's past is as a farming and fruit-growing community, it is intrinsic to the village's character.

Endurance Estates has shown no respect for existing tree preservation orders. Indeed several trees with TOP's have been highlighted for felling, citing reasons in conflict with the opinion of the tree preservation officer. One such tree highlighted for felling (locally known as "Old Bob"), with significant local and ecological value, stands in the way of the proposed pedestrian and emergency access. It is this complete lack of understanding of local feeling and the environment which is another example of harm the development would do if given the go-ahead.

Evidence to support all the above conclusions is set out in the accompanying document.

In conclusion,

Throughout our critique of the planning application, Melbourn Parish Council has kept the concept of harm in mind. We think the following quotation from one of the respondents to our consultation sums the situation up nicely:

‘Harm is a difficult notion to describe and quantify. It comes in various forms. Public safety, feeling of well being, confidence, visual impact, sense of place, sense of community, belonging. These are but a few of the emotional responses that people talk of when describing their environment...the proposal to build an extra 200+ houses on the outskirts of the village will cause a disconnect between the existing village and the proposed new development and the potential for a breakdown in social cohesion. Lack of community cohesion will lead to segregation. Segregation will lead to social issues.’

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A: Report on the consultation on the proposal by Endurance Estates to build 200 houses off New Road, presented to Melbourn Parish Council on October 27 2014 **(separate document)**

B: Comments submitted as part of the Melbourn Parish Council consultation 2014 **(separate document)**

C: Report from the consultant on flood risk, drainage strategy and sustainable energy

D: Report from Travel Planning Consultants on traffic modelling and travel sustainability **(separate document)**

E: Correspondence between Melbourn Parish Council and Endurance Estates/Sharpe Communications

F: Melbourn Parish Council exhibition of the EE planning application

G: Our thanks go to.....

SECTION 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our vision for Melbourn is a place where:

- There is a strong sense of community and community spirit.
- Children are educated in our village school from pre-school to GCSE level.
- Residents can obtain health services in the village.
- The village utilities support normal expectations of modern life: efficient sewerage and fast broadband, for example.
- Residents can travel to and from their homes to gain access to the major roads without delay, and can park near to village facilities if they need to.
- Residents feel safe when they are walking or cycling in the village.

In the view of Melbourn Parish Council, this Planning Application (S/2791/14/OL) should be refused. The proposal to tack 199 dwellings onto the periphery of the village jeopardises our vision for Melbourn.

The reasons for the Council's view are set out in the following pages with supporting evidence, set out under 4 headings:

- Principle of any speculative development
- Infrastructure concerns
- Concerns about an isolated, large development
- Concerns specific to the Endurance Estates planning application

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Parish Council objects in principle to this speculative application because:

- a. The site is located within the open 'countryside' in both the adopted and the emerging South Cambridgeshire local plans, where there is a general presumption against new development; and
- b. Notwithstanding any case on five-year housing land supply, the proposals do not comply fully with all three strands of 'sustainable development', as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposals are premature and would prejudice the emerging South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which is currently at Examination in Public.

The proposals will have a harmful landscape and visual impact on the countryside.

The Parish Council carried out its own consultation between 29th September and 13th October 2014. Of the 1648 respondents, 86 % opposed development on the land east of New Road. Therefore, the proposals are contrary to the wishes of the majority of the local community. *Details of the consultation are given in Section 2.*

INFRASTRUCTURE CONCERNS

Melbourn is already a large village and has seen a 3-fold increase in population during the last 60 years.

- In 1951 the population was 1425.
- By 2001, it was 4414 people in 1741 households.
- By 2011, it was 4689 people in 1978 households.

Growth has continued, with for example, Brooksbank which provided the village with 13 affordable homes and The Hub. A further development of 64 homes in Victoria Way was granted planning permission on 4 December 2014. The Parish Council has supported these developments.

Full details of Melbourn's growth are given in Section 3.

Melbourn has an historic centre within a conservation area, and its major road layout reflects travel patterns from the early part of the 20th century. These factors result in a narrow High Street with buildings opening directly on to the road, allowing no option of road widening.

The long process of piecemeal development, whilst maintaining the village's character, has led to a situation in 2015 where *the Parish Council and Melbourn residents feel that no further significant increase in population can be supported without an upgrade to key pieces of infrastructure*. Without these upgrades, harm will result.

Sewerage, drainage, and flooding

Sewerage

Anglian Water, responsible for sewers in Melbourn, has provided Endurance Estates with a statement to the effect that the foul sewerage system network, at present has available capacity for the site (Foul Sewage and Utilities Assessment, November 2014). The Parish Council disputes this. Modelling may suggest this to be the case but, in reality, problems already occur.

Demonstrable harm occurs in one particular area of the village when sewage spills into the street. This occurs with the current population. Adding an additional 199 houses can only exacerbate the problem.

Full details of our case are given in Section 4

Drainage and Flooding

Superficially, the assessments submitted by Endurance Estates appear to have covered the required points. However, our expert considers that:

- The amount of data submitted is very small for a development of this size.
- There is insufficient detail to allow the flood risk assessment, drainage design, etc to be signed off.
- The conclusion that there is a low risk to groundwater cannot be demonstrated. The numerous soakaways on private land which cannot be policed actually means that there is a high risk of contamination. **The Environment Agency should be asked to model this situation.** The application does not suggest an alternative approach if soakaways are subsequently found to be unsuitable, and it is too late to discover this once outline planning permission has been granted.
- The soakaways proposed to deal with surface potentially increase the risk of flooding. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate they will not because the impact of rapid groundwater recharge from so many soakaways has not been assessed.

Full details of our case are given in Section 4

Traffic flow into, out of and through the village

The proposals will increase the number of trips made by private car in the village and are likely to exacerbate queues and congestion at key local junctions during peak periods. As Melbourn is classified as a Minor Rural centre, it is also important to note that the speculative planning applications coming forward together with those included in the LDF will all have a cumulative (deleterious) effect on traffic flow and patterns in Melbourn.

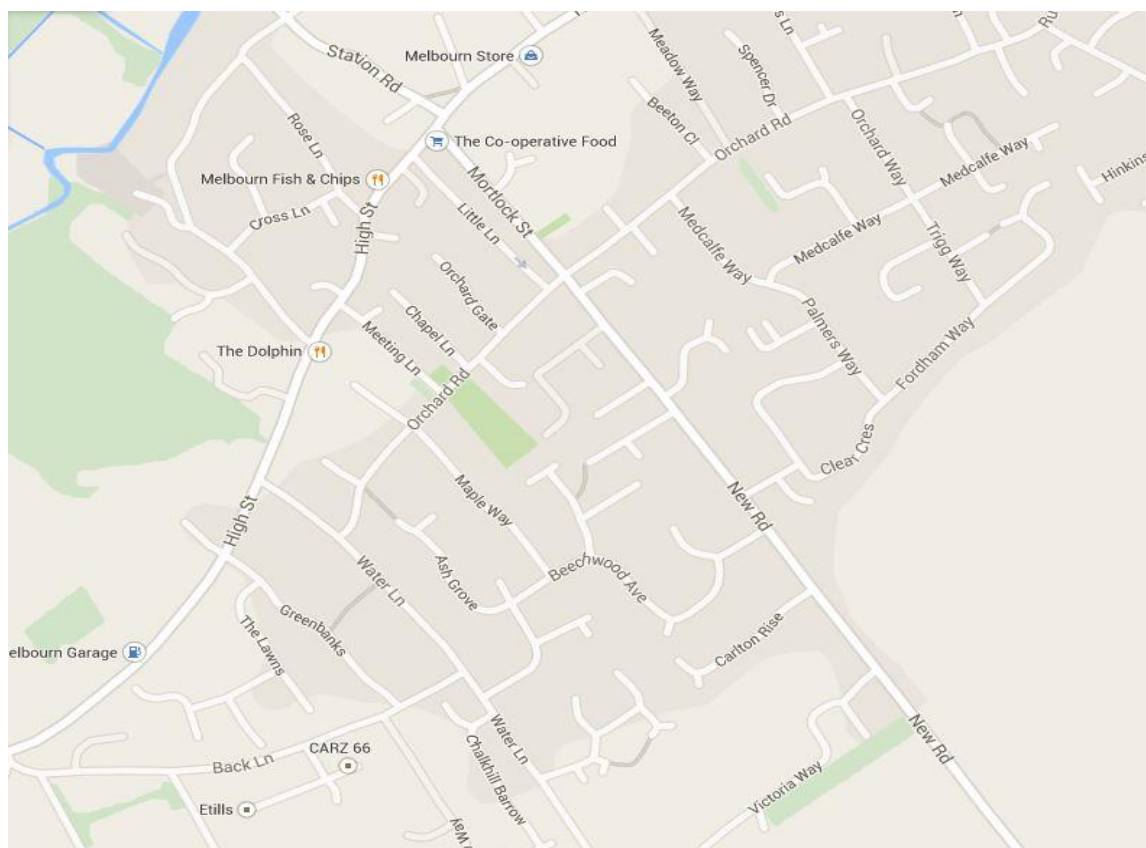
Information on patterns of use of transport, vehicle ownership and traffic flow is set out in Section 5.

We show that there are existing problems which any further increase in traffic will exacerbate. Congestion is problematic in the New Road/Orchard Road/Mortlock Street area, particularly at school drop off and pick up times. This is exacerbated by any spill-over parking on New Road from the GP surgery. If this situation happens, New Road is effectively turned into a single lane road, because of the traffic calming measures already in place and residential parking.

In addition, the short stretch of road between Victoria Way and Orchard Road already contains many junctions. This is shown in the map on the next page. As a resident noted:

‘The area for planned development is located on a road with 8 junctions between Victoria Way and Orchard Road crossroads. The extra volume of traffic will cause severe congestion for users. Not only are there these junctions, there is also school traffic, traffic calming and traffic lights to contend with, all of which add to the potential congestion on New Road.’

Map showing junctions between Victoria Way and Orchard Road



Has the likely impact on the Ambulance Service been taken into account?

The East Anglian Area HQ of the Ambulance Service is situated in Melbourn, off Back Lane. As well as providing a paramedic service for our area, the HQ is the base for specialist equipment for responding to accidents and other emergencies.

It is thus vital that the emergency service can respond quickly and the service not be jeopardised by traffic congestion in or around Melbourn.

Has this risk been properly assessed in the traffic modelling submitted with the planning application?

Our traffic consultants have identified 2 major problems with the transport assessment provided, as follows:

Problems with the layout of Junctions on New Road

For vehicles approaching from the A505 from the south, there are issues around forward visibility at the junction with the proposed development and also the potential conflict with vehicles turning in and out of the committed development on Victoria Way opposite the proposed site.

The proximity of junctions and speed of approaching vehicles needs further scrutiny.

Modelling of the distribution of extra traffic

A planning application for 64 homes on a site essentially opposite the proposed site was recently granted permission. In the work undertaken for the 64 homes we assume that the traffic predicted to be generated by the scheme was presumably agreed with the Highway Authority and distributed on the highway network in a manner that the Highway Authority deemed acceptable as a reflection of local conditions and demands. Logically it follows that any further development in that location should follow that pattern also. The developer's transport assessment **does not** and furthermore they have chosen a distribution of proposed traffic that is entirely advantageous to them and one that lessens the impact on the signals at The Cross. If they had followed the previously consented distribution of traffic, our transport consultants believe that the signals will not work even with the adjustments proposed. It would also likely result in queues past the primary school in Mortlock Street.

We request that Highway Officers check this thoroughly.

Other Infrastructure Issues:

Early years and Primary School

At present Melbourn is served by 2 early years providers (Little Hands and the Melbourn Pre-school. The latter shares a site with the primary school). Both are full and will have to accommodate children from the further 64 homes which have just been granted planning permission. Melbourn Pre-school does not have room to expand on its current site.

Melbourn Primary School is also at capacity. It already has 2 mobile classrooms. The layout of school is the result of piecemeal additions over many years. Whilst there is room to build onto the school, it will be very hard to add capacity in a way that makes sense of the need to transform it into a 2 form entry school.

Melbourn Parish Council has discussed with the SCDC s106 officer what provision might be made to provide the additional places which would be needed to accompany 199 extra houses.

The Parish Council is alarmed to discover that the money which the developer will be expected to contribute falls far short of the real costs. So for a primary school place the developer will be asked to contribute £8,400 but the real cost is £19,000. **How can this situation be allowed to continue?**

We also understand that the timescale for providing additional school places will be completely out of sync with building. Work on design of an extension will not start until plans for a development are well-advanced, and then funding has to be found. In our estimation there will be up to 5 years with children but no places available for them.

There is demonstrable harm to the village in this case if we cannot educate our children locally in line with the County Council's stated intent (FOI response).

GP Surgery and Dentist

The surgery is already at capacity. There is a proposal to extend the surgery to accommodate additional patients, which is to be welcomed. However, **there is no room to expand the car park**. At peak times, parking already extends into the surgery access road and onto New Road itself. This adds to the congestion in New Road referred to elsewhere in this report.

The surgery serves not only Melbourn but the neighbouring villages of Meldreth, Fowlmere and Shepreth. It also, jointly with Harston, serves Barrington and Foxton. Both of these villages also have proposals to build 160-200 homes in each. Patients can realistically only travel to Melbourn from these villages by car – by definition patients are ill and will not undertake convoluted journeys by public transport and walking.

The dentist has had no spare NHS capacity for some time.

Until all of these infrastructure issues are resolved, there should be no more significant development in Melbourn.

CONCERN RELATING TO ANY LARGE DEVELOPMENT SITUATED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE OFF NEW ROAD

Lack of sustainability

South Cambridgeshire District Council has itself recognised that Melbourn does not pass the test for having a good public transport service². It said that “.. the railway station at Meldreth is too far away from the village centre, and due to the frequency [of the service] would not alter the result.....”

The proposed development is at the outside of the village in the opposite direction to Meldreth station. If SCDC feels it is too far away from the centre, then the idea that people will walk to the station from the proposed development is laughable.

In any case, it is clear from data from the 2011 Census data that 70% of the total working population aged 16-74 years travel to work by car/van, with only 2% taking the bus and 6% taking the train.

Further information to contest the assumptions made about people's willingness to use public transport rather than their own vehicles is given in Section 6.

This development is not sustainable.

Harmful landscape and visual impact on the countryside

The proposed site covers 10.9 hectares. The SHLAA (Site 320 Land to the east of New Road, Melbourn; p2308) notes:

“Developable area 6.75 ha (Note significant adverse townscape impacts were identified with the larger site (26.02 ha) but a reduced site of 9.02 ha gross could help mitigate these impacts.”

How does the proposed site of 10.9 hectares square with the 9.02 ha cited in the SHLAA? Is this acceptable to SCDC and if so, why?

The Design and Access Statement seems to be claiming (p21) that the proposed development will be enhancing the boundary of the village by mitigating the effects of past development:

“Post war development has little cohesive visual qualities with the historic core of Melbourn. When situated on the edge of the village, houses present an unsympathetic appearance, with the hard form and undistinguished vernacular of development conflicting with the gentle undulating agricultural landscape..... The

² Village Classification Report 2012, p10

design of more recent development on Victoria Way similarly fails to respond to the landscape setting, with a suburban road-dominated character and undistinguished built form.”

Melbourn Parish Council notes that the comment about Victoria Way is supported by a photograph of the development which completely misrepresents the situation. The photograph shows the view looking towards New Road. This is where the additional 64 houses are to be built, and hence this view will be within the site not a boundary with the countryside.

Single point of entry and exit, funnelling traffic into New Road/ Potential lack of integration of this area of the village

The proposal shows a single road leading onto the development, together with a separate pedestrian/cycling and emergency vehicle access slightly to the north of the access road. Both lead off New Road. The plan lauds the provision of large gardens for the houses at the north of the development but this simply adds to the isolation of the development as it leaves no opportunity to include other means of entry to the development.

The Design and Access Statement says (p12)

“The application site is situated in a sustainable location with excellent access to Melbourn’s array of services and facilities.”

Melbourn Parish Council challenges this assertion. The isolation designed into the site means that residents will have to travel through the site to New Road adding a significant distance to any journey. This means that residents will be less likely to walk/cycle (see Section 6).

As shown in Section 2, this development would add 10% to the overall village population in an essentially separate community.

The Parish Council considers that harm will result to the community in that there will be a significant decrease in community cohesion.

CONCERNS RELATING SPECIFICALLY TO THE PROPOSAL PUT FORWARD BY ENDURANCE ESTATES

Proposed felling of a locally important tree

The plans submitted by Endurance Estates include an emergency vehicle and pedestrian/cycle entrance to the site, in addition to the main road access. This entrance is shown as being between Clear Crescent and the existing farm and 2 other dwellings.

To make this suitable for emergency vehicle access, a tree will have to be felled, as shown by the map below.

‘Uncle Bob’

The tree Endurance Estates wishes to fell is known locally, and with affection, as ‘Old Bob’. There is a recent social history attached to it which is shared by people still living in the village.

This tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order as shown in the map below.

The report from Hayden’s Arboricultural Consultants (submitted by Endurance Estates) says:

“Mature specimen featuring bacterial canker which is present throughout the stem.Specimen features a snapped branch which is still attached with the end of the branch resting on the ground. Bleeding canker is present throughout this limb. ...”

Melbourn Parish Council contests the view that this tree is so diseased that the TPO can be ignored, and the tree removed.

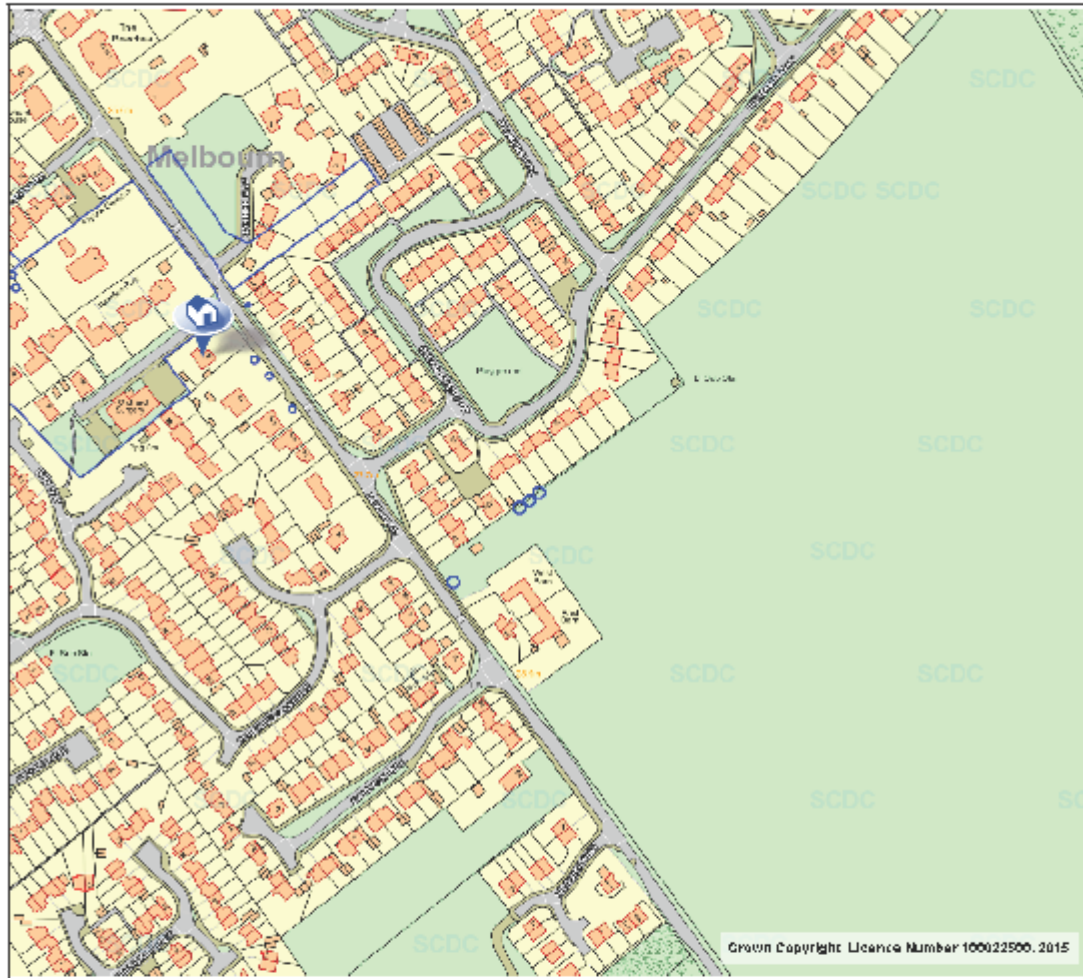
‘Uncle Bob’



Map showing TPOs on the proposed site



New Road Melbourn Cambridgeshire SG8 6BX



Map Legend
Tree Preservation Orders 2014
□ TPOs 2014

0 m 100 m 200 m

Why 199 houses and not 200?

Could this be anything to do with the fact that 200 houses triggers more burdensome obligations for the developer? Shame on Endurance Estates!

Archaeological remains

Melbourn Parish Council notes the following comments about the archaeological finds:

- Conclusion 7.3 of the report Assessment of Aerial Photography for Archaeology: “The site is likely to contain discrete Bronze Age funerary sites which are very eroded.”
- The Archaeological Evaluation report No 1663 notes in its conclusion section a number of finds:
 - Later Neolithic pit with hearth stones and possible pothole
 - Prehistoric field system and possible well/watering hole with it
 - Ring ditch with possibility of preserved human remains
 - Presumed Roman ditch in Trench 12 suggests a predecessor to the ridge and furrow/east-west tracking system

Are any of these features too significant to be obliterated by the proposed development? Do they need further excavation to assess their importance and need for preservation?

Adverse Impact on existing facilities

The proposals make no provision on-site for associated community or retail uses, or for significant areas of formal public open space. Instead the proposals are likely to place a greater burden on existing services, facilities and utilities in the village, some of which lack the capacity to accommodate this quantum of growth.

Suggested play space near New Road ‘for existing local residents’ seems to overlook the proximity of Clear Crescent playground which has recently been upgraded.

Density of Housing

The SHLAA specifies 30 dwellings per hectare The Design and Access Statement however refers to (p97) a density of 35 dwellings per hectare over the 5.6 hectares (net developable area). In the initial leaflet produced by Sharpe Communications, and on which village views were sought, the density was specified as 20-25 dwellings per hectare. The Parish Council considers the leaflet to have been misleading.

Can Melbourn Parish Council be assured that these two statements are not at odds and that, if the 35 dph is in line, it is the same as used in other recent housing developments in Melbourn, for example, the recently approved 64 homes off Victoria Way.

Lack of consultation by Endurance Estates, and failure to take into account the wishes of the village

It is the Parish Council's view that there has been the absolute minimum of consultation with the local community, as demonstrated in Section 7.

Provision of off-street parking

We have observed that off street parking capacities are limited in the submitted design, especially for dwellings on the main access route. There is no rationale for reducing the level of parking from the maximum standard applicable. The levels of transport accessibility and proximity of local amenities are poor.

In addition, parking facilities for the care home appear limited. Endurance Estates has suggested around 30 spaces, which seems insufficient for a 75 unit home. There is also staff and emergency vehicles to consider.

SECTION 2

CONSULTATIONS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SIGNIFICANT FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF MELBOURN

The village plan (2010/11)

As part of the information collected for the Melbourn Village Plan, residents responded to 3 questions asking for views on new house building. The study provides robust data, having achieved a response rate of 52% households.

AGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION
In Melbourn there should be no more housing		
35	39	26
Melbourn should be allowed to grow beyond the present village boundary		
18	68	14
Melbourn should be allowed to grow by infill building on sites within the village boundary		
23	59	18

At this point, about 20% of residents supported access to new homes in Melbourn. Here no number had been put on the amount of new housing to be provided.

Further questions were asked to determine the types of new housing which would be supported:

- The strongest support was for initiatives to convert redundant buildings for housing (70% agree – 8% disagree) and initiatives to provide homes for local people (63% agree – 12% disagree).

- There was support for smaller homes:

Type	Agree %	Disagree %
2 bed starter homes	51	20
3 bed family homes	44	22
4 bed larger family	22	38
5 bed	13	48

- Also 46% agreed there should be more community homes for retired people (19% disagreed) and 37% agreed there should be more sheltered housing (27% disagreed).

The local plan (2013)

In early 2013, as part of the South Cambridgeshire District Council consultation on the Local Plan, the views of Melbourn residents on sites H7 (the site of the current EE application) and H8 were collected. The consultation was based on the location of the proposed sites, and the number of houses that might be built on each site - 205 on H7 and 60 on H8.

RESULTS OF THE 2013 CONSULTATION

A total of 669 consultation forms were collected within the village. Other people submitted forms directly to South Cambridgeshire District Council. The best estimate of the total number of responses is 760.

The consultation showed that:

- 84% of respondents objected to the proposed developments
- 8% supported the proposals
- 8% commented without supporting or objecting

H7 and H8 were not included in the final Local Plan, and the well organised response from the Melbourn community played a large part in achieving that result.

Response to the Endurance Estates proposal (2014)

When Melbourn Parish Council learned that Endurance Estates was likely to submit a speculative planning application for H7, it carried out a further consultation specifically relating to that proposal. Endurance Estates had circulated a leaflet with Melbourn and neighbouring villages at that point. The MPC consultation was limited to residents of Melbourn.

The consultation was carried out between 29 September and 13 October 2014. Strenuous efforts were made to encourage everyone to 'Have their Say' whether they supported or opposed the development. Respondents were asked to say whether they did or did not support the proposed development or whether they had no opinion, and were invited to give comments about why they held that view.

A summary of the outcomes is given on the next page.

The outcome of the consultation was presented to the Parish Council on 27 October 2014. The report contains full details of the methodology used (Appendix A).

WHO RESPONDED?

Melbourn contains 2100 homes, has a population of nearly 5000 and circa 300 businesses.

- 1648 individuals, of which 78 were young people aged under 18
- 10 businesses
- 2 other organisations: the Primary School and Melbourn Village College

In 2013, 760 people responded to the consultation. Thus for this consultation, over twice as many people gave their view.

WHAT DID THEY SAY?

For individuals:

- 86% were against the proposed development
- 10% supported the proposed development
- 2% had no opinion
- 2% votes were spoiled

For businesses:

- 60% were against the proposed development
- 20% supported the proposed development
- 20% had no opinion

For other organisations:

- Both schools supported the proposed development

Thus, respondents were overwhelmingly against the proposed development.

The % for and against was very similar to the 2013 consultation (84% against in 2013 and 86% against in 2014) despite the much higher response rate in 2014 (1648 in 2014 as opposed to 760 in 2013).

Of the 1648 responses to the questionnaire, 1110 respondents elected to provide written comments explaining the reasons for their recorded view.

There were 991 sets of comments against the proposed development, 102 from those in favour and 17 from those who expressed No opinion.

A significant aspect of the responses was that, whether a person for or against the proposed development, there was generally a qualification about the need for upgrades to the village's infrastructure before any further significant development should be permitted:

‘The development would be good for Melbourn but the Doctor’s will need a larger surgery or move to 24 hours service. Routes into and out of Melbourn will need to be investigated, especially the A505 entrance onto New Road. There will be a need to increase facilities in the village.’ (for)

‘Melbourn is already committed to housing development with a number of sites recently completed and others in the process of being approved. The village fully realises the need for expansion, but in a controlled way that the resources we have can adequately cope with.’ (against)

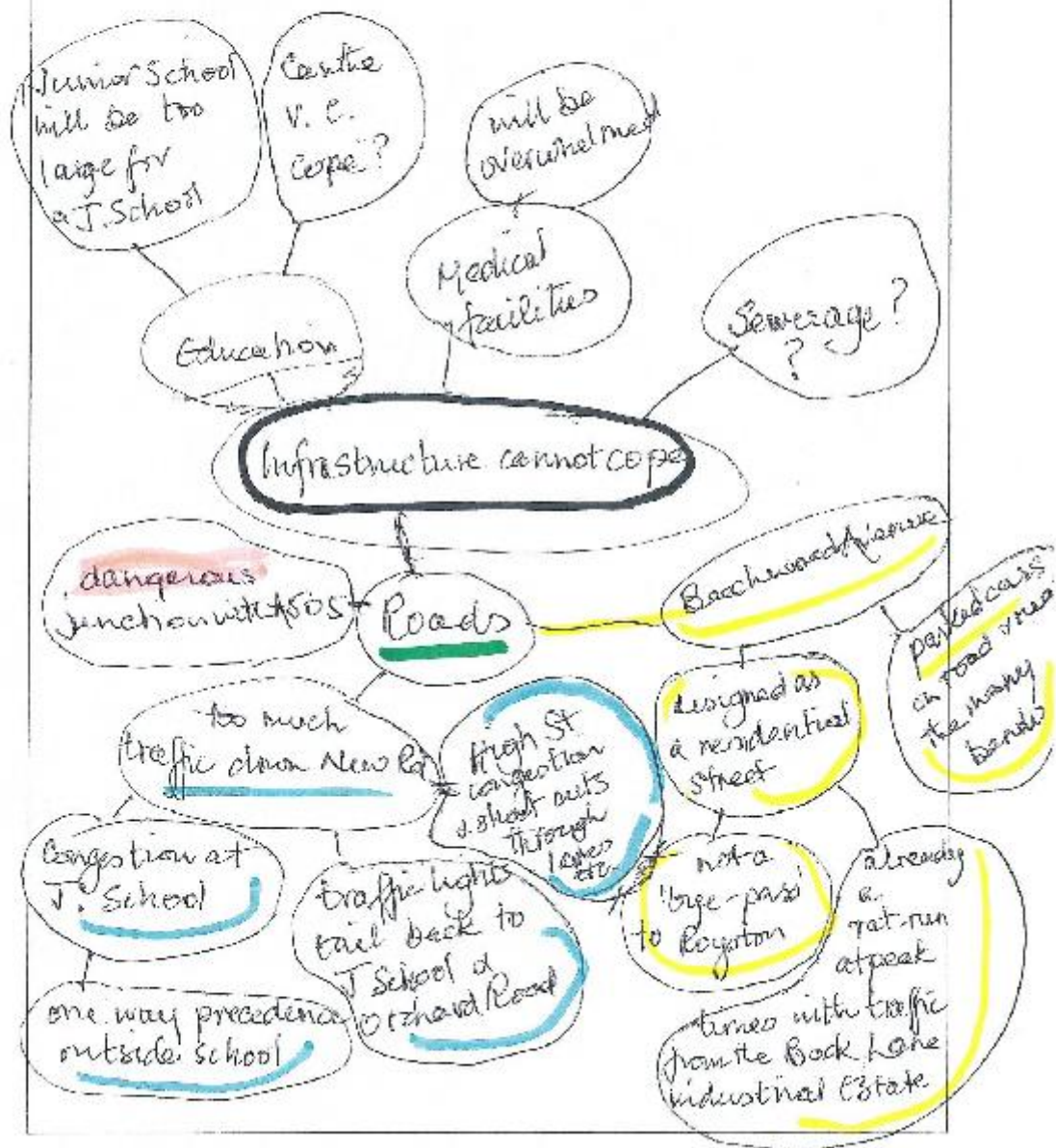
Summary of comments of those for and against the development

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of Housing Locally and Nationally • Access to Housing • Types of Housing Needed • Appropriateness of the Development site • Potential Impact on the Village • Impact on schools • An opportunity to develop the Village • Infrastructure Concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes to development in Melbourn • Impact on Services • Impact on the Village • Impact on the primary school • Additional Impact issues • The potential ‘Harm’ to the Village • The perspective of the children of Melbourn • Site Concerns • Alternative sites • Who are the houses for? • Infrastructure Concerns • Traffic Issues • Impact on specific Roads in the Village • Transport Concerns • Problems of sewerage and drainage • Employment prospects

A full representation of responses is given in Appendix B. The thoughtful way in which many respondents provided their views is illustrated on the next page.

PLEASE GIVE YOUR REASONS FOR TAKING THE VIEW
RECORDED OVER THE PAGE

The infrastructure of the Village cannot cope.



SECTION 3

CONTEXT OF MELBOURN AND ITS RECENT DEVELOPMENT

Melbourn is situated 3 miles to the north of Royston, Hertfordshire and 9 miles south west of Cambridge. It is bounded by the A505 in the south and the A10 in the north.

It is the largest village in the south west of South Cambridgeshire.

Melbourn has been classified by South Cambridgeshire District Council as a **Minor Rural Centre** in the 2012 Village Classification Report. The summary says (p10):

“There is no rural centre nearby but [Melbourn] is located near to Royston. It has Melbourn Village College within its boundaries and has a range of shops and facilities, but not on the scale of the larger villages in the district. It does not pass the test for having a good public transport service (the railway station at Meldreth is too far at over 1 km from the village centre, and due to the frequency would not alter the result) but does score well for employment opportunities, given the presence of its Science Park.”

Population

Over the past 60 years, a 3-fold increase in population has taken place:

Population of Melbourn Parish (Source: Office for National Statistics)			
Year	Number	No. Households	Av. Per Household
1951	1425		
1961	1830		
1971	3100		
1981	3844		
1991	4200		
2001	4412	1748	2.52
2011	4689	1978	2.35

People like living in Melbourn!

At the time of the Village Plan in 2010, residency time was (%):

<6 months - 2; 6-12 months - 4; 1-2 years - 5; 3-5 years - 12; 6-10 years - 15; 11-20 years - 19 and 21 years - 43.

The SCDC Village Classification report 2012 graded Melbourn as 1 for employment, on a par with Sawston. Information collected for the Melbourn Village Plan revealed that in 2011, approximately 1000 people commute into the village to work.

Mode of travel to work in Melbourn

80% (including some people who live in the village; separate figures not available) travel to work by car, compared with walk (7%), cycle (7%) and train (7%).

Number of dwellings

At the time of the 2001 Census, there were 1779 dwellings in Melbourn. By 2011, the number had risen to 2015. Since 2011, there have been a number of additional developments and more in the pipeline:

Location	Number	Status
Brooksbank	13	Built
The Moor	10	Pending
The Star, High Street	5	Approved
Victoria Way	64	Approved

The Parish Council has also supported planning applications for 1 or 2 homes.

Melbourn Parish Council and Melbourn residents have a history of welcoming planning applications for sustainable new homes, as shown by the very positive relationship that has been established between the PC and the developers for the 64 houses off Victoria Way. Where an objection has been raised (for example, the recent application at The Star in the High Street) there have been very specific reasons for our objections.

Impact of additional 263 houses

If the Endurance Estates proposal were to be permitted, taking into account also the 64 houses already approved for Victoria Way, there will be an increase of 623 residents based on 2.35 people per household. This is 13% *with no guaranteed increase in infrastructure to support them*. For the EE proposal, it would be a 10% increase in population.

Rural Hub

As well as supporting residents, Melbourn's facilities also serve other villages.

Meldreth: GP, dentist, secondary school, sports facilities, shops

Shepreth: GP, dentist, primary and secondary schools, sports facilities, shops

Foxton: GP (50% Foxton residents are currently registered), dentist, secondary school

Fowlmere: GP, dentist, primary and secondary schools, sports facilities, shops

SECTION 4

SEWERAGE, DRAINAGE, AND FLOODING

Sewerage

The sewerage system in Melbourn is constructed such that sewage from the rest of village is collected together and flows underneath Thatcher Stanfords Close. When the system is affected by failures to the pumps, excessive run off of groundwater after rain or blockages caused by unflushables, eruption of sewage into Thatcher Stanfords Close occurs.



The situation is described in the leaflet produced at a time when the issue was causing frequent problems. (see on the next page)

Anglian Water carried out some work to improve the situation. However, Melbourn Parish Council does not consider the simple statement from Anglian Water that there is “capacity in the system at the present time” to be a sufficient assessment of the capability of the system to cope with an additional 199 (plus 64 in Victoria Way) new homes.

The potential for the proposed development to cause harm to another part of the village is of great concern to Melbourn Parish Council.

Melbourn's Sewage Problem

You may or may not be aware that all of Melbourn's sewage is pumped right under Thatcher Stanfords Close, where raw sewage spillage incidents are becoming more frequent. Despite Anglian Water's assurances to the contrary, the system is overloaded and the pumping station by The Army Cadets hut seizes up regularly, even in dry conditions. Just this last December/January there were 4 incidents. The last one was the worse so far, with the foul smelling raw sewage containing faeces and toilet paper spilling out of the manhole and washing over the pavement near the houses for most part of the night and following day. At the time there were kids playing on the road, next to this potentially damaging health hazard.

With the recent approval by South Cambridgeshire District Council of the planning application for the development of land on 31 The Moor, which will see 11 new houses built on the site, more pressure will be put on the system, while no upgrading of its infrastructure has been considered. Furthermore, the future development of land near New Road would see 200 new houses built. The impact of this level of development on an already stretched and inefficient sewage system is difficult to imagine. What is sure is that the residents of The Moor and adjacent streets, in particular Thatcher Stanfords, will be the first to suffer the consequences, as sewage leaks are already a common occurrence, even in bone dry weather.

If you are concerned about this issue, please report each incident by letter or email to Anglian Water with copies to Melbourn Parish Councillor Jose Hales and County Councillor Susan van de Ven who are dealing with this issue. Awareness of this problem and exercising pressure on Anglian Water could help to alleviate the issue.

Please write to:

Customer Services
Anglian Water
PO Box 10643
Harlow
CM20 9HB
anglianwatercustomerservices@anglianwater.co.uk

Copy to: Councillor Susan van de Ven
95 North End
Medneth
Cambridgeshire
SG8 6NU
susanvandeven@yahoo.co.uk

Copy to: Councillor Jose Hales
23 Elm Way
Melbourn
SG8 6UH
cllr.hales@josehales.me.uk

Sewage leaks over last 5 years (source: Anglian Water)

2007 no incidents
2008 2 incidents
2009 no incidents
2010 2 incidents
2011 2 incidents
15/07/2012
21/07/2012
20/12/2012 (incident 38201938)
23/12/2012
02/01/2013
03/01/2013 (incident 38322358)

Flood risk and Drainage Assessment

The full report from our Hydrogeologist consultant is given in Appendix C.

The proposed site does not lie within any source protection zones, as noted by the applicant. However, because of the local geology, the water table is relatively shallow in Melbourn and thus anything which enters the ground could affect the River Mel rapidly. The River Mel has been the subject of much work over the past few years as a joint project with residents of Meldreth and advisers from SCDC.

Our chalk stream is one of a very rare type that has its source in aquifers (underground lakes) below the chalk. Its source is springs at Melbourn Bury and it flows for 5 miles through Meldreth on its way to a confluence with the Rhee.

Chalk rivers have a characteristic purity. This is because the source water (but not what flows in from surrounding areas) has been filtered through the overlying chalk.

The River Mel restoration Group says on its Home page:

“Our work may also influence the planning authorities, Parish, District and County, to be aware of the importance of the river when considering planning matters.”

Melbourn Parish Council shares that aspiration.

Surface water from the rest of Melbourn³ is taken away through the surface water system and thus does not impact the quality of the River Mel. However, this application proposes that surface water is dealt with on site through a system of numerous soakaways. There is no way of policing what goes into the ground and therefore the risk of contamination entering the River Mel should be presumed to be high *unless the developer presents data to show otherwise*. If the River Mel becomes polluted, there will be **harm** caused to both Melbourn and Meldreth.

There are a number of deficiencies in the information provided in the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy which should be addressed to provide evidence to support the conclusions drawn.

³ With the exception of some more recent small developments

Points to be addressed

- An assessment of the potential impact of the development on neighbouring land to consider what will happen if there is a much more rapid arrival of rainwater to ground than is currently the case.
- An assessment of rapid groundwater recharge from so many soakaways to neighbouring properties.
- Data to substantiate the statement that there would be no off-site impact from a significant rainfall event.
- An assessment of the impact on Fordham Way if the soakaways adjacent to these houses stop working.
- No detail is provided about the infiltration tests carried out, and crucially it is not possible to judge how the infiltration rates change spatially and how/whether this has been factored into the design of the system of soakaways.
- The appendix of the Site Specific Flood Risk assessment and Drainage Strategy presents data which suggest that the soakaways would not in general be able to deal with the 1 in 100 year rainfall intensities. This would result in flooding but the report does not acknowledge this or consider how the design could be improved.

1 in a 100 Year Rainfall Event – What Does It Mean?

A 1 in a 100 year rainfall event is not as its title suggests a 1 in 100 year storm.

The Met Office see it as an insurance rather than a recognised meteorological term although they produce the data from which it is calculated and provide postcode specific data which list the rate of rainfall ranging from two minutes to two hours in length. The intensity of rainfall is dependent on its duration and frequency and using an example of the postcode data, rainfall of 2 minutes intensity that occurs twice a year provides a flow of 51.1 mm/hr whereas rainfall of 2 minutes duration for a storm occurring 1 in a 100 years give a flow of 194mm/hr.

The Environment Agency provides flood risk maps which delineate zones where the risk of flooding is expressed in terms of probability and define a 1 in a 100 year rainfall event as any event which has a 1% (1 in 100) chance of occurring in a given year. There are however several ways that a 1 in 100 year rainfall event can occur within one year or several years running. As the rainfall event is based on probability the chance of a particular rainfall event does not change if such an event has already occurred in a previous year. An analogy may be drawn from the game of roulette where the chances of the ball landing in '0' remains the same for each spin.

Therefore a 1 in a 100 year rainfall event may indeed occur repeatedly in the same year, though the probability of doing so is itself smaller than 1 in a 100.

Furthermore, Melbourn Parish Council notes that totally inadequate effort has been made to determine whether or not flooding occurs. This is evidenced by the following e-mail exchange:

From Endurance Estates to SCDC:

"Have you had chance to review point 1 of my mail for the site in Melbourn? Most grateful for any information/records you may have for flooding at this site."

Reply from SCDC to Endurance Estates:

"Afraid I have no information that might be useful – same advice applied as for the Gamlingay site."

Richard Jackson (on behalf of Endurance Estates) has simply taken this to mean there is no problem. This area is currently agricultural land and we see no reason why any flooding on it would have been reported to SCDC. In fact, local residents report that the corner of the field nearest to the farm and East and West Barns **does** suffer from standing water following heavy rain. There is also evidence of water running down New Road from the brow of the hill and causing flooding at the junction with Carlton Rise.



SECTION 5

MELBOURN TRAFFIC: SAFETY AND OTHER CONCERNS

Development of Melbourn's road network and traffic patterns

Melbourn lies between two main trunk roads: the A10, which historically was contiguous with the High Street, and the A505. The historic settlement was along the High Street and along what is now Station Road towards the adjacent village of Meldreth. These factors result in a narrow High Street with buildings opening directly on to the road, allowing no option of road widening.

Traffic uses Melbourn as a short cut between the two trunk roads. New Road, joining the centre of Melbourn to the A505, has a longstanding weight restriction but the advent of the SatNav has seen an increase in inappropriately large vehicles finding their way into the centre of the village. Traffic from the neighbouring villages of Meldreth and Shepreth in particular comes through Melbourn to access the A505.

The population of Melbourn has grown rapidly since 1950, increasing by a factor of 3 times. During this period the routes in and out of the village remain essentially the same.

A by-pass was built in the 1980s and now takes the A10 round to the west of the village. At the time, the by-pass was justified by the reduction of through-traffic in Melbourn but there is a perception that some of the benefit has been eroded over the intervening years. A report on the village from the early 1970s (need reference) recorded concerns with respect to traffic speed, volume, safety and congestion parallel those still made today and detailed in this section.

Melbourn is *atypical* of many villages in South Cambridgeshire because of the strong business presence. Two industrial parks have developed over the years.

Safety concerns

There are already a number of well-documented safety concerns relating to traffic in and around Melbourn:

- Junctions with A roads, especially with the A10 at Frog End. Our County Councillor (Susan van de Ven) is concerned about the cumulative effects of proposed developments in Barrington and other villages (and see below).
- Around Primary School in Mortlock Street and Orchard Road, where there are longstanding issues of congestion making safe crossing for the children

difficult. The possibility of providing a Lollipop crossing in Orchard Road was investigated but rejected by the authorities.

- Speeding into village especially from A10 on Cambridge and Royston Roads. The Parish Council's Highways Committee is already considering this issue due to the numerous concerns raised by residents. These are documented in committee minutes over several years.

There is a very strong opinion (documented in the Melbourn Village Plan from 2011) that the two main junctions serving the A10 from the village are unsafe. The visibility and layout of the Frog End junction in particular is regarded as dangerous. The right turn from the village into the A10 has been demonstrated as a significant figure in the County Council accident cluster list.

Misleading statement in the transport assessment

The report states that there are no capacity issues at the Frog End junction. However, there is a significant accident cluster record at this junction and the cumulative impact of additional vehicle movements at this critical strategic road junction must be acknowledged and addressed

Businesses consider traffic and travel matters mainly in terms of their employees' ability to travel to and from work, and for the transportation of goods and supplies. Their views of the transport system were influenced by the quality of transport routes to and from the village. Several (see Melbourn Village Plan) had serious concerns about the safety of traffic entering the by-pass, those with trucks or trailers finding particular difficulty.

Nuisance

The Parish Council has well-documented (minutes of meetings, letters from residents, County Councillor's casework (see Councillor Van der Ven's response to the planning application, responses to consultation) instances of traffic not behaving as predicted/directed by road signs which lead to nuisance and congestion:

- Abuse of the current one-way systems which are there to improve safety of accessing the High Street from side roads, of speed limits in the village and the weight restriction on New Road – A505.
- Rose Lane and Dolphin Lane as short cuts. These are unlikely to be impacted by a development in New Road.
- Beechwood Avenue/Back Lane used as a rat-run for access to the business park from A505. This occurs despite the businesses and Ambulance Service giving undertakings that their employees would enter the village from the A10 to the south. **This route is also an obvious shortcut for anyone living on the proposed development and wishing to access Royston via the A10.** Hence we predict an exacerbation of this nuisance by the proposed development.

An alternative route to the A10 to head towards Cambridge is to take Orchard Road and then Russet Way. This is a residential Road and is used for parking by residents. There is already congestion in Orchard Road, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. The modelling in the proposal assumes that this is the route that people will take from the development if they wish to access the A10 to Cambridge. **It is unacceptable to increase the volume of traffic taking this route.**

Congestion

There are 2 major sources of congestion:

- Mortlock Street and Orchard Road, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Outside the Co-Op when deliveries interfere with traffic flow at traffic lights.



In addition problems can occur in the High Street between The Cross and Royston Road when buses or a bus/lorry meet.

All of these instances of congestion have a knock-on effect on traffic flow at the traffic lights at The Cross.

In the Design and Access Statement, it is stated (Section 1.3, p7) that:

“The main vehicular access route.....is the A10 approximately 1 mile to the North of Melbourn.”

That being so the majority of traffic will have to pass through the village centre (The Cross) to access the development. **Is this taken into account by the traffic modelling?**

Overall Impact

Melbourn Parish Council recognises traffic issues as one of the major concerns of village residents. This has been demonstrated through responses to the consultations (Section 2). The Council therefore commissioned **Transport Planning Consultants** to critique on its behalf the traffic modelling submitted as part of the planning proposal. Its assessment is given in Appendix D

One finding of great concern is the blatant use of data which do not reflect the current traffic patterns.

Modelling of Traffic at The Cross

At the signalled junction at The Cross the existing traffic flows show significant movements both to the right and ahead on leaving Mortlock Street in the morning peak and a corresponding movement in the evening peak. This demonstrated by the information presented by the developer and by Melbourn Parish Council (p? of this report).

It would be reasonable to expect that the assignment of development flows would reflect this existing use pattern. Instead the assumptions are made that 28 trips will be diverted via Russet Way (itself a problem due to congestion in Orchard Road which leads to Russet Way and is another point of access to the Primary School) and that no trips take the straight ahead movement to Station Road.

This omission has the advantageous impact on the junction model of removing a significant increase in the number of right turns at the junction, which will always in these circumstances of constrained space create very significant delays for the operation of the junction

The proposed works and measures to mitigate impact are weak and ineffective with no guarantees of either implementation or success. Without assurance of impact, harm will result for village residents and their quality of life.

SECTION 6

TRAVEL SUSTAINABILITY

Conditions to encourage sustainable travel

For the proposed development of 199 homes to be sustainable, new residents will either need to be drawn into a pattern of walking/cycling/use of public transport already established in the village, or the developers will need to offer a package of inducement that changes behaviour *in the long term*.

As we demonstrate below, neither of these conditions are met.

CURRENT PATTERNS OF VEHICLE USAGE

Car/van ownership in Melbourn

At the time of the Melbourn Village Plan (2011), the average number of vehicles per household was determined as 1.56 and there were 1975 households at that time. Thus the estimated number of vehicles was 3082. This is in line with the 2011 census data reported the number of cars/ vans as 2981.

With an increase of 264 dwellings (Victoria Way and the proposed development opposite it), this will lead to an additional 400 vehicles (13%) **all originating from the same point in the village.**

Usage of cars/van by Melbourn Residents

The 2011 Census data show that for travel to work (16-74 years):

70% travel by car/van; 2% by bus, 6% by train; 3% cycle and 9% walk.

Work/school destinations

Residents' main place of work (%): At home – 10; Melbourn – 16; Nearby – 24; Cambridge – 20; London – 8

Place of education (%): Melbourn – 49%; Cambridge – 27%; other - 24

Commuting *into* Melbourn

The Village Plan recorded well over 100 businesses operating from Melbourn. Approximately 90% of those working in Melbourn live outside the village; of those, 80% travel to work by car; 7% walk; 7% cycle and 7% travel by train (Melbourn Village Plan).

Mode of transport to the Primary School:

Children were asked how they travelled to school on one morning in mid-October (2014). Overall, 42% travelled by car (45% in Foundation; 38% in Year 1/2; 51% in Year 3/4; 35% in Year 5/6).

Some walking and cycling currently takes place in Melbourn but the predominant travel culture is one of car use. There is no evidence presented in the application to suggest that the new population will behave differently to the existing one.

USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Rail use patterns

South Cambridgeshire District Council has itself recognised that Melbourn does not pass the test for having a good public transport service⁴. It said that “.. the railway station at Meldreth is too far away from the village centre, and due to the frequency [of the service] would not alter the result.....”.

There is currently no regular bus service to Meldreth station. The 128 makes 1 trip per day at 12.45pm and this may not continue beyond spring 2015. In any case, the proposed development is at the outside of the village in the opposite direction to Meldreth station. If SCDC feels it is too far away from the centre, then the idea that people will walk to the station from the proposed development is laughable.

The developer suggests a circular minibus route connecting to Meldreth station but conveniently ignores that this will have to be operated and funded by someone else.

The developer predicts (in the trip distributions/assignments made in the transport assessment) no trips to Meldreth station.

What evidence do they have to support this view, given the established use of the train as a mode of transport to work and college in Cambridge, as well as commuting to London?

A further point to take into consideration is that Meldreth has a significantly poorer train service to London than does Royston, both in terms of frequency and journey time. Many Melbourn residents chose to travel to Royston to catch the train.

⁴ Village Classification Report 2012, p10

Train Travel from Royston Station

A straw-poll was taken of the people on the Parish Council's consultation up-date e-mail list. Out of ca 200 names, 18 responses were received.

- 10 respondents travel every day or several times a week; 7 respondents travel several times a month; 1 respondent travels once or twice a year.
- Respondents choose Royston because trains are more regular and faster, opportunity to buy papers, etc at station.
- The majority of respondents drove themselves to Royston and parked there, although a few were dropped off.
- Very few respondents said they gave lifts to other travellers. It is almost always 1 person per car.

Elderly and disabled travellers are not able to use Meldreth station. It is one of the least accessible stations on the Cambridge-Kings Cross Line and is the subject of a long-running accessibility campaign. It is also difficult to access for people with pushchairs because the London-bound platform on the Melbourn side is isolated by two sets of steps: one to the field and one over the track.

Issues missing from developer's application

The applicant overestimates the ease with which improvements to the field route to the station can be made. The field is mostly in private ownership and a number of issues are not addressed:

- A DDA compliant ramp to the station platform on a combination of Network Rail and private land.
- A DDA compliant footpath connecting to Station Road with new additional lighting on private land.
- A maintenance plan including cost sponsorship for that path surface and lighting.

We are disappointed that the developer has made no effort to ascertain from the well-established local Rail User Group what plans already exists or how the developer might contribute to them.

Bus service

At the time of the MVP only 31% of businesses thought the bus service was satisfactory. Melbourn still has a regular bus service to Royston and Cambridge. This is vital to a section of the populations which depends on it. However, even in 2011 the arrangements were far from perfect as evening and weekend services were either very poor or non-existent. There were no Sunday bus services.

The early morning service from Cambridge into Royston begins at 09.21 making this impractical for most work-related purposes via Royston. Services to Cambridge are better: buses run at 6.43, 7.38 and 9.21 am. Students do use the bus to travel into Cambridge for Sixth Form College.

The only regular bus service for surrounding villages is the 26 between Royston and Cambridge which calls at villages on that linear route only. Meldreth is not served by this route. **Stagecoach has been approached in the past year to ask if alternative services could be directed through Meldreth (as used to be the case). The response was that it would not be economically viable.**

ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT HOW PEOPLE WILL USE VEHICLES IN PROPOSAL

It is common practice to assume certain patterns of behaviour when compiling a travel plan to form part of a planning application. For example:

- Cycle 5 kms
- Walk for 10 mins to access any local facility (shop, school, etc). This is 800m at 5 kph
- Any journey under 2km (ie from New Road to the Science Parks and Meldreth Station) would be deemed acceptable

However, the information which the Parish Council has gathered suggests that this is not what happens in practice. **People use their cars because this is what is convenient for them.**

In addition, the site is only to be exited via New Road. This means that there is no more direct route to the village facilities, Meldreth railway station, Melbourn Village College than for people to have to walk/cycle through all the residential area to reach the main travel route.

This is a significant barrier to walking/cycling in our view.

Distances to local amenities

It is unacceptable to use distances measured from the New Road entrance to the site rather than properties within it due to the large scale of the site operating on a single entrance point.

Incentives to Travel Sustainably

The developer has included a £50 cycle voucher and one week bus voucher. Where is the evidence that this type of action works? Melbourn Parish Council asked the SCDC s106 officer if there is any evidence to support the claim that such trifling

actions by developers have any impact on long term travel habits. He was not able to provide any.

Given that:

- the level of bus service available does not support its use for work; and
- there is a 900m walk from the site entrance to the nearest bus stop

this mode of public transport is not a viable option or not the travel method of choice for many types of resident.

Impact of inducements to sustainable travel

The developer has not demonstrated that its inducements to use public transport or walking/cycling will have any impact. Nor is there any independent evidence to suggest that this might be the case.

Impact of Care Home

The 2011 Census data show that 28% of the population of Melbourn was over 60 years of age, with 10% being over 75. We have no information on the age profile expected to occupy the 199 homes. However, the proposal includes a 75 bed Care Home. These residents will need to be transported into the village centre to access the facilities. Their friends living in other parts of the village will be elderly and will have to travel to the Care Home by vehicle.

Lack of Travel Plan relating to Care Home

If the developer is serious in its stated intention to build a care home on the site, a Travel Plan needs to be provided because of the cumulative traffic issues at the site's junction with New Road and the traffic light at The Cross described in our report.

Conclusions

The critique undertaken by **Transport Planning Consultants** also considered sustainability aspects of the proposal.

Its conclusions are set out in Appendix D.

SECTION 7

CONSULTATION BY ENDURANCE ESTATES

Seeking the views of the village and Parish Council

Melbourn residents were alerted to Endurance Estates' intention to submit a planning application for the site known as H7 in September 2014 when Sharpe Communications distributed a leaflet within Melbourn and the surrounding area. The leaflet contained a schematic layout for the site, and suggested that certain community benefits might be included (care home, small offices for local businesses, doctors' surgery, dentist, crèche or community building). People were asked to submit comments. The process was hampered by a substantial number of people in the village not receiving the leaflet. In our view, providing information to local newspapers and hoping that people will see that a consultation is going on is no substitute for a properly conducted, comprehensive survey.

The section in the Design and Access Statement does not give a figure for the number of responses received. Counting the summaries given in Appendix 2 of the Design and Access Statement suggests 165 responses were received, compared with 1648 from the consultation carried out by Melbourn Parish Council. Neither are figures given for the number of responses for and against.

This is the extent of the consultation with the local community.

On p79 of the Design and Access Statement, the following comment is made:

"The site lies in the Melbourn ward in the South Cambridgeshire District, and is also covered by Melbourn Parish Council. As such, the local ward members and all Melbourn Parish councillors were sent a letter on 29 August informing them of the proposal and the imminent consultation. In this letter, the local ward members and the Chair of the Parish Council were also invited to meet with the developer to discuss the proposal.

A further letter was issued to ward and Parish councillors on 19 September, explaining the second delivery of leaflets and that officers and ward members had been invited to monitor the delivery.

Additional multiple invitations to meet with the developer to discuss the proposal were issued by telephone and email to ward councillors, Melbourn Parish Council and Melbourn Housing Development Awareness Campaign (Meldhac). These invitations have been declined. "

All correspondence between the PC and Sharpe Communications and Endurance Estates is given in Appendix E.

Melbourn Parish Council makes the following comments:

- The letter of 29 August *does not* include an invitation to meet the developers to discuss the proposal. It simply gives contact details.
- MPC and the ward councillors considered it was up to Sharpe Communications to ensure that *their* consultation leaflet was effectively delivered.

More importantly, the comments above omit a very important point. Councillors and the PC did not decline invitations to meet the developer *per se*. They said that they would not have private meetings as requested by the developer (see the e-mail of ?? to the Parish Clerk). We indicated our willingness for the developer to come to our open Planning Committee meetings and present their proposals. This is what has happened with other potential developers and the PC has worked with them in an open and constructive way.

Melbourn Parish Council further notes that Endurance Estates have held a public meeting in Gamlingay, where they are proposing to build 30 houses. However, despite a direct request to hold an open exhibition in Melbourn, Endurance Estates has declined (see Appendix E). To keep Melbourn residents informed, the Parish Council staged its own exhibition of the planning application on 24 and 25 January (see Appendix F).

Melbourn Parish Council considers that EE has failed to consult the people of Melbourn properly. We asked SCDC to put a hold on the application until EE had consulted in an honest and inclusive way. We were told that EE had done the minimum required.

EE's conclusions from their consultation

The Design and Access Statement acknowledges that (p80) by far the most common suggestions were to use the site to provide a doctors' surgery and [primary] school facilities. **Where are they?**

It then says "Another suggestion was for a care home." This was the first suggestion Sharpe Communications had put in the community benefit part of its leaflet so it is hardly surprising people included it! In our consultation of 1648 people, **0** people mentioned a care home. In the actual comments, the support is for bungalows and homes suitable for older and disabled people. **Where are they?**

This is not listening to and responding to the requests of village residents. This is deciding what the developer wants to provide and biasing the consultation.

APPENDIX A – SEPARATE DOCUMENT

APPENDIX B – SEPARATE DOCUMENT

APPENDIX C

REPORT FROM THE CONSULTANT ON FLOOD RISK, DRAINAGE STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

I have read through the planning documents relating to New Road, with a particular focus on drainage, groundwater, flooding and renewables. In general the documents reflect a common poor standard and content generated widely for such developments. The documents reviewed are currently lacking detail, do not substantiate statements and conclusions adequately and reference documents which I could not readily find in the documentation provided on the South Cambs web portal. The following forms my main observations/comments:

Within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Design and Access Statement:

- This document correctly summarises the hydrogeology of the site but suggests there is a low risk to groundwater and that it is no so sensitive. It is true that the proposed site does not lie within any source protections zones surrounding any water company or large abstractions; nevertheless some or much of the groundwater passing beneath the site will end up in the River Mel, a very high quality Chalk stream. The Chalk is actually very sensitive as the water table is relatively shallow thus anything that may enter the ground could affect the river quite quickly. It must be noted that the same applies to much of Melbourn.
- This document does not consider all possible renewables. Ground source heating is probably the most viable for a project of this nature and is not considered in this document.

Within the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy:

- The proposal is aiming to deal with all surface water on site so that only sewage will leave and need to enter the current system. This is now the preferred way forward for new sites in England. The proposed use of soakaways across the site means there would be dozens if not hundreds, the risk of something entering the Chalk is therefore relatively high as many would be in the gardens of houses and there would be no way of policing what went into the ground.

- The flood risk assessment is brief and does not adequately take into account the potential impact of the development on neighbouring land. Given the large number of soakaways being proposed across a relatively small area, there could be a much more rapid arrival of rainfall water to ground than would currently be the case. As evapotranspiration and other processes will be reduced, any delay in the downward movement of water into the ground provided by the soil and subsoil is removed from the 'process' when soakaways are used.
- The applicant should be required to assess the impact of rapid groundwater recharge from so many soakaways on the neighbours' properties, particularly below ground structures (basements, cellars, ducts, below floor voids, drains, etc), groundwater levels in the local area and the risk of groundwater flooding.
- The flood risk assessment does not adequately consider what would happen to properties and land down slope of the site if there was to be a significant rainfall event in excess of the one in one hundred year (plus 30%) rainfall rates. The assessments currently say there would be no effect off site without substantiating the statement.
- The documented infiltration tests completed are appropriate although no data is provided or any of the workings. This means it is impossible to verify their calculations. The site is variable yet there is no discussion of how the infiltration rates change spatially or whether this has been factored into the positioning and design of each of the many, many soakaways. The proposed soakaway design cannot therefore be approved without the data, workings, and design rationale for each soakaway or group of soakaways.
- The sheets within the appendix which list the calculated infiltration and risk of flooding from the soakaways, suggest that the soakaways (assuming they are designed based on a single infiltration rate for the whole site) would in most instances not be able to deal with the 1 in 100 year (+30%) rainfall intensities resulting in flooding of the soakaways. There is no comment in the report on this or how the design could be improved or if they already have been.
- The document is thus not sufficiently detailed, beyond setting out how drainage may be managed *in principle*, the document(s) are insufficient to allow the flood risk assessment, drainage design etc to be signed off.

Within the Energy and Sustainable Design document:

- The document lists the various renewable technologies it states are considered in the report, including ground source heating (GSH). Yet the document does not consider GSH and briefly considers air source heating which is then dismissed. Their consideration towards different renewable

energy options is so brief, poorly assessed and badly compiled that it cannot surely be considered valid. This must therefore mean that the applicant has not adequately considered the options, presumably because they want to limit those included to easy systems such as solar thermal and solar PV.

Best regards,
Tim Baker
Principal Hydrogeologist
Director B.A. Hydro Solutions Ltd

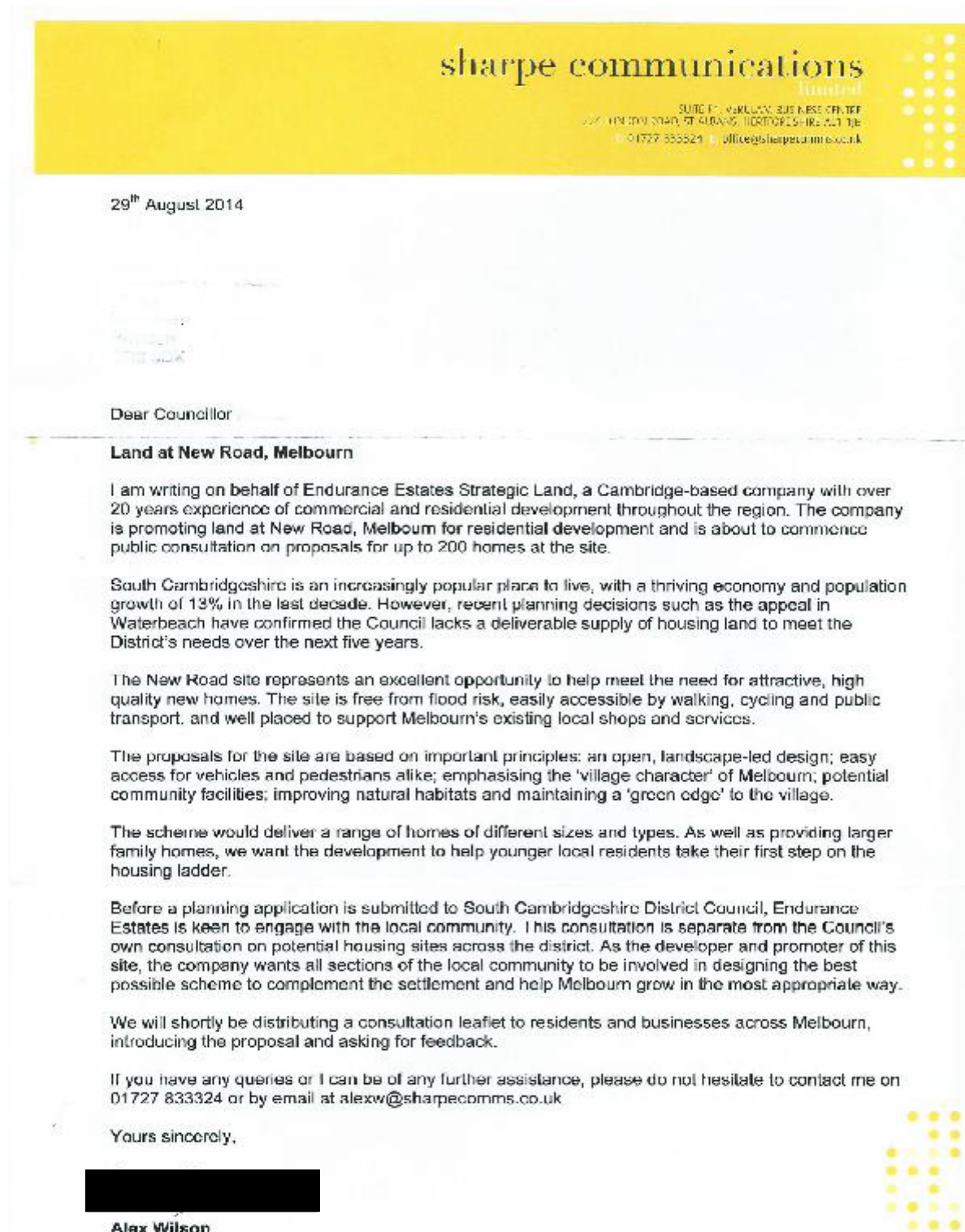
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APPENDIX D – SEPARATE DOCUMENT

APPENDIX E

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL AND ENDURANCE ESTATES AND SHARPE COMMUNICATIONS



18th September 2014

Dear Councillor

New Road Housing Proposal – Consultation Leaflet

On behalf of Endurance Estates, on 3rd September we sent a consultation leaflet to every residential and business address in Melbourn and surrounding villages.

We are confident that the leaflet was delivered properly, and we have been assured of this by evidence from our distributor, with whom we have a long standing and successful relationship. It is therefore disappointing to hear that some residents in Melbourn have not seen the leaflet and we are taking immediate steps to rectify this.

We want to ensure that local people have the opportunity to review the scheme and tell us what they think. Therefore, we have made arrangements for the Melbourn delivery to be repeated on Monday 22nd September, when a copy of our consultation leaflet will be hand delivered to every residential and business address in Melbourn.

We have taken the feedback about the original delivery very seriously and, on this occasion, we will personally monitor this second delivery as it is made, to be absolutely sure it is done correctly.


As with the original, this delivery will be tracked by sophisticated GPS tracking devices, which allow us to follow the exact GPS location of the delivery team live from any device connected to the Internet. We have invited Council officers and Councillors Hales and Barrett, the local ward representatives, to monitor the delivery in person and on-line, should they wish.

We very much hope that local people will engage with us by returning their feedback cards. Whilst we acknowledge that there is opposition to a housing development on this site, it is also clear that more homes are needed in Melbourn and we believe that a good scheme on this site can be delivered successfully and sustainably. The scheme presents opportunities to improve footpath links, provide community facilities and contributions towards enhancing local schools, as well as delivering much needed affordable homes to help meet the Council's desperate shortage.

In the event that our scheme should ultimately achieve planning consent, we feel it would benefit from the constructive involvement of the local community. Pro-active engagement with us does not prevent people from continuing to voice their objections to the scheme.

I am enclosing a copy of the consultation leaflet, for your information. Should you wish to discuss any aspect please do contact myself or my colleague Alex Wilson on 01727 833324 or by email to tracy@sharpecomm.co.uk; alexw@sharpecomm.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,


Tracy Hostler
Director

Correspondence continued

NB: District Councillor Barrett was also contacted and did not meet Endurance Estates or Sharpe Communications.

From: [Jose Hales](#)

Sent: Monday, October 06, 2014 11:39 PM

To: Subject: RE: Endurance Estates - Melbourn

Dear Tracy,

Thank you for your email. I'm afraid I will be declining your invitation to meet on the grounds that as yet I haven't been able to personally get a full picture as to what my community feels and wishes me to do. When that picture is clear to me, I may well accept the offer.

Regarding the re-delivery of material appertaining to the New Rd site, I again do not feel it my place to be part of this process in so far as monitoring etc, however I understand from one of your colleagues that you are also delivering this leaflet to Meldreth, Shepreth and Fowlmere. In the interests of clarity, could you confirm that this is true and provide a reason as to why.

I would appreciate the answer in writing, thank you.

Kind Regards

Jose

From: Tracy Hostler **Sent:** 19 September 2014 14:23

To: Subject: Endurance Estates - Melbourn

Importance: High

Dear Cllr Hales,

You have previously spoken to my colleague Alex Wilson, who is on holiday at the moment. I have been trying to contact you today to discuss the project promoted by Endurance Estates Strategic Land to develop new homes in Melbourn on the New Road site. Unfortunately I haven't managed to reach you but have left you a voice message. I would be grateful if you could return my call – .

In case I do not manage to speak to you, I wanted to be sure to let you know that following feedback received, we will be carrying out a repeat delivery of our consultation leaflet. This will take place between approx. 8am and 12pm on Monday 22nd September. We will be monitoring the delivery and you are invited to join us in person on Monday, or monitor live on line using any device that can access the Internet. Should you wish to log in on line, please call my office and speak to either Simon or Alex (if I am unavailable) and we can give you the necessary log in details.

We are writing to Parish Cllrs today to advise them of the re-delivery. We are also issuing a press release today to advise the general public of the re-delivery.

We are still very keen to meet you and Cllr Barrett as the local representatives. I have spoke to Cllr Barrett this morning but she has again declined this offer, and I have expressed my disappointment to her. However, I hope you will feel differently and in anticipation can I suggest some potential dates, as follows:

- Wednesday Sept 24th after 12.00pm
- Friday Sept 26th at 9am
- Monday September 29th after 2pm
- Tuesday 30th Sept after 12.00pm
- Wednesday 1st October any time

Please let me know if you would like to take up this offer to meet and discuss our proposal, and if these dates aren't suitable please suggest alternatives. This invitation remains open, as it has since we first contacted you about our plans on 29th August.

Please do contact us at any time if you have any queries.

Kind regards

--

Tracy Hostler

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<http://www.sharpecomms.co.uk>

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From: Alex Wilson **Sent:** 25 September 2014 15:48

To: Parish Clerk

Subject: Land at New Road, Melbourn

Dear Mr Horley,

Further to our telephone conversation on Tuesday, we acknowledge that the Parish Council does not wish to meet with Endurance Estates and its Development Team in anything other than a formal, scheduled meeting of the Parish Council or its Planning Committee. We would like to express our disappointment with this decision.

We appreciate that a significant number of local residents are not supportive of proposals for new housing on the New Road site, as has been evidenced through previous consultation, the recent public meeting and some of the responses we are receiving to our current consultation.

However, we are also aware of the acute shortage of housing sites, which all local authorities and communities must share in providing, and we firmly believe that South Cambridgeshire District Council will be required to come forward with additional sites in the area.

It is in this context we are promoting our scheme on the New Road site as a highly sustainable option with a high level of affordable homes and, if required by residents, land for community use, and in this context we wish to have genuine engagement with the Parish Council as key representatives of the local community.

We understand that some people want to object to the proposal, and we are certainly not asking them to desist.

All we are asking for is the opportunity to discuss elements of the scheme so that, in the event that a planning application is ultimately successful on the site, the local community has had the opportunity to influence the evolution of the scheme.

We want our scheme to be able to reflect local requirements for housing size and tenure, configuration of open space and community facilities – and in doing so, your input would be invaluable alongside the feedback we are also seeking from residents via our consultation leaflet. It would not, however, in any way detract from your prerogative to object to the general principle of development if that should become the Parish Council's wish later in the process.

Given the current atmosphere, we do not believe it would be possible to have a constructive dialogue in the public arena such as at a formal Parish Council meeting. However we would still like the opportunity to discuss in detail with you as representatives of the local community and therefore ask you and your members reconsider the possibility of meeting us early next week.

Kind regards

--

Alex Wilson

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5 January 2015

Dear Mr Wilson

Planning Application S/2791/14/OL

Councillors have read the submitted documentation with interest and noted that in the Consultation Section of the Design and Access Statement – a section prepared by Sharpe Communications – it is stated that:

“Our primary objective has been to inform the local community and key stakeholders of the details of the proposals and seek widespread feedback about the proposed scheme, prior to the submission of a planning application.”

You will be unsurprised to hear that Melbourn Parish Council's view is that you have fallen far short of that objective. In particular, there has been no opportunity for Melbourn residents to view anything other than the original schematic, and to ask questions or seek clarifications from you or the developers. Councillors have learned that Endurance Estates is providing a public exhibition for the residents of Gamlingay, where only 30 homes are planned. Melbourn residents might reasonably expect a similar opportunity when 199 homes are at issue.

Melbourn Parish Council has secured an extension until the end of January to the deadline for its comments on the above planning application, submitted by Endurance Estates for land off New Road in Melbourn.

I am therefore writing to invite you to hold a public exhibition in Melbourn before the end of January so that residents might have a genuine opportunity to provide the feedback you say you want.

We request an exhibition to be held at the Melbourn Hub (in the centre of the village so that it is easily accessible) and at times when people will be able to attend: Thursday and Friday evenings at 6-8 pm, and Saturday afternoon 2-5 pm.

District Councillors and Parish Councillors have always made it clear that they would welcome the opportunity to meet you and the developers, and discuss the plans ***in public***. We are disappointed that you have not done this, and hope that you will respond positively to our request for a public exhibition.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Peter Horley,

Clerk to the Parish Council

From: Alex Wilson [m [REDACTED]]
Sent: 07 January 2015 17:02

To: Parish Clerk

Subject: Re: Letter from Melbourn Parish Council

Dear Mr Horley,

Thank you for your letter of 5th January.

In advising our client on appropriate consultation programmes for their sites in both Melbourn and Gamlingay, we have not only taken into account (and exceeded) the requirements of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Statement of Community Involvement, but also tailored the respective approaches to the scale and context of each of the proposed developments.

In Gamlingay, where a smaller number of houses are proposed in what is also a smaller village, we advised that an informal 'drop-in' session be held. This was not a formal public exhibition, and although open to all it was particularly targeted towards the immediate neighbours to the boundaries of the site. The material on display reflected the fact that these plans were also at an early stage and that pre-application feedback is being sought prior to submission – as with the Melbourn proposal.

In Melbourn, it was precisely because of the greater numbers involved – both of the proposed development itself and the existing local community – that we sought to consult more widely than either a drop-in or an exhibition would allow. As you know, we delivered a leaflet across the entire village – twice – to ensure every resident had the opportunity to take part in our consultation. The leaflet also included contact details for residents to ask questions or seek further information, and a number have done so.

We discussed our proposed consultation approach for the Melbourn scheme with planning officers at South Cambridgeshire District Council and, as already stated, exceeded the level of pre-application consultation that is required.

It is also worth noting our multiple offers to meet with District and Parish councillors have been refused.

We therefore do not accept your invitation to hold a public exhibition, which we do not feel in this context would be any more appropriate for meaningful engagement over and above that which we have already undertaken.

Kind regards

--

Alex Wilson

SHARPE COMMUNICATIONS LTD

PROPERTY COMMUNICATIONS | PR & PUBLIC AFFAIRS | COMMUNITY CONSULTATION | CAMPAIGN PLANNING | GRAPHIC DESIGN

E-mail sent Wednesday 21 January

Dear Mr Wilson

Thank you for your response . I re-iterate again that Parish Councillors have always been willing to meet you in public session. It is your desire to hold the meetings in private which has been the stumbling block.

As you declined the invitation to hold a public exhibition, the Parish Council has decided to put your plans on show at The Hub in Melbourn High Street on Saturday 24 January 5.30 to 7.30pm and Sunday 25 January 9.30 am to 2pm. You are welcome to attend.

We have notified the local press of the exhibition.

Yours sincerely

Peter Horley
Parish Clerk

APPENDIX F

MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL EXHIBITION OF THE EE PLANNING APPLICATION

The exhibition was held 5.30 to 7.30pm Saturday 24 January and 9.30am to 2pm Sunday 25 January at Melbourn Community Hub. Visitors were given an explanation of why the Parish Council rather than Endurance Estates has arranged the exhibition (first photo). The Design and Access Statement provided by Endurance Estates as part of the planning application was enlarged and displayed. Melbourn Parish Council did not offer any commentary on or interpretation of Endurance Estates' plans. The full planning application was available for residents to look at if they wanted more details of the proposal.

