

# Public Document Pack



<b>MSDC COUNCIL</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023 5.30 PM</b>
<b>VENUE:</b>	<b>KING EDMUND CHAMBER, ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH</b>

For consideration at the meeting on Thursday, 26 October 2023, the following additional or updated papers that were unavailable when the Agenda was printed.

## TABLED PAPERS

		<u>Page(s)</u>
5	<b>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	3 - 4
8	<b>QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES</b>	5 - 6
	The Chairman of the Council, Chairs of Committees and Sub-Committees and Portfolio Holders to answer any questions on any matters in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the District of which due notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.	
11	<b>MC/23/21 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS 2022/23</b>	7 - 34
	Community Governance Review Working Group	
15	<b>COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS</b>	35 - 36
	To appoint a Sustainable Integrated Transport Working Group.	

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact the Committee Officer, Committee Services on: 01473 296472 or Email: [Committees@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Committees@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 5

## MSDC COUNCIL – 26 OCTOBER 2023

### ITEM 5 – LEADER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### 1. Storm Babet

Last weekend’s floods were the worst Mid Suffolk has experienced for many years. It has been a deeply distressing time for many of our residents and businesses, who have seen property damaged and lives disrupted. A huge clean-up is now well under way, and I know we will all continue to do all we can to support residents, businesses and communities during this recovery period.

Additional council staff have been deployed in the worst affected areas to assist with the clean-up and to help find temporary accommodation for affected residents, in areas like Debenham, Stowmarket, and Needham Market. Drying out properties and getting repairs done will take time, but we are committed to supporting residents and helping communities to recover. We welcome the government’s announcement of recovery funding, and we will work with the County Council and other agencies to secure this and make sure it reaches those in need.

I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who was there for our communities at the weekend:

- To our emergency services
- To our council staff who responded to the flooding.
- To councillors who were out in your communities over the weekend, doing outstanding work, identifying issues and taking action.
- To our town and parish councils, and the local volunteers who helped their neighbours, family and friends.
- To the farmers who helped ferry children through floodwater and rescue motorists.
- To the Debenham leisure centre staff who provided an overnight rest centre for those forced from their homes.
- To the teachers and school staff who ensured the safety of children.

There will be many more I’ve missed. Thank you all.

It was a difficult weekend, there is still a lot of work to do, but we should recognise this fantastic show of community spirit.

#### 2. Corporate Plan Refresh

I would like to remind everyone that there is still time for people to have their say on the council’s future direction and priorities. We have outlined the administration’s draft priorities, but want feedback from the community – are these priorities right, what else could we do, what have we missed?

The survey is live until the 15<sup>th</sup> November, and details can be found on our website. I hope members will encourage people to take part. Posters and postcards have also been created which you can share in your communities.

### **3. Free net zero advice**

We're pleased to have partnered with Groundwork East to deliver free, impartial, expert advice to help businesses and organisations save energy, reduce their emissions and establish tailored decarbonisation plans.

This new Net Zero Business Advice Service will provide free support to help businesses, the voluntary sector and other organisations understand their greenhouse gas emissions, set a plan to reduce these and access grant funding to implement carbon reduction actions.

More information about Net Zero Business Advice can be found on our website.

### **4. Safer Suffolk Renters**

This new initiative aims to improve life for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector. We are joining forces with Suffolk's other district and borough councils to deliver this ground-breaking project.

'Safe Suffolk Renters' is designed to create a better understanding of the pressures and problems in the sector, and to improve standards - particularly in the worst private rented homes in the area. To achieve this, the project team will consult widely with tenants, landlords and stakeholders in the county.

A conference taking place at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich on 3<sup>rd</sup> November is free for any landlord to attend. Details are also available on our website. Similar conferences for tenants and stakeholders will follow.

### **5. Cosy Homes insulation project**

Lastly, members will recall the amendment to the last budget, agreed unanimously, to set aside £2 million for insulation and other home energy saving measures. Officers have been working hard to design the scheme, and I am pleased to say that we will be launching this initiative, called "Cosy Homes" next month. My colleague Councillor Winch has been working with officers and will provide full details ahead of the launch.

# Agenda Item 8

**MSDC COUNCIL – 26 OCTOBER 2023**

## **ITEM 8 - QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

### **Question 1 - Councillor Lucy Elkin to Councillor Rowland Warboys, Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council**

In July, this Council unanimously approved the motion to write to the government in order to register our objection to the proposed Norwich-Tilbury pylon line and to call instead for an integrated offshore approach. A letter was subsequently sent to the then Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Rt Hon Grant Shapps, and then to his successor in the role, Rt Hon Claire Coutinho; with reference to this, can I ask the Chair if he has received a response?

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 11

## Community Governance Review Responses

### Battisford Parish Council

Following a Parish Council meeting held on 17th May 2022 I can provide the Battisford Parish Council response below:-

"A discussion took place in respect of the current boundaries of the parish and the difficulties faced with the Boundary Commission over the last 3yrs.

It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk would provide the following to the Review:-

1.To restate the Bowl Meadow development as part of Battisford Parish.

2.Bildeston Road between Little Finbrough and Battisford Tye is currently a disconnected part of Combs; access to the rest of Combs by road passes through Little Finborough in one direction and Battisford in the other.

This section of road should be re-allocated to either Battisford or Little Finborough or shared equally of Little Finborough and Battisford Tye.

3.This has been raised 3yrs ago with the Boundary Commission."

### Councillor Miles Row

I've not got anything to add re Combs and Battisford boundary.

It is more the Stowmarket and Onehouse boundary which impacts local residents given it is a growth from Stowmarket rather than core of Onehouse as they might not get consulted about people paying less council tax who are attached to the same settlement.

There are the various points raised by Stowmarket Town Council and the difficulty in the district in being able to make a suitable joint local plan if there is a village in 2 settlements but then we try to argue developer's should not be allowed to connect the parts of the village. I know ill thought out growth is a worry to residents.

### Councillor John Matthissen

It may be early days in the review, but the Onehouse parish council would like all residents of that parish to be consulted, not just those in the area being claimed by the town council.

## Councillor Keith Scarff

Firstly, I believe that I must advise you that I am a Stowmarket Town Councillor, I do not believe this should stop me as a County Councillor giving a view on this subject.

Therefore, I would like to express my support in favour of Stowmarket Town Councils consultation response. Their argument is based on extremely sound reasoning and refers directly to the guidance that should be used when considering a Community Governance review. Consistently over a period of many years the Town Council has supported the view that there should be a recognised clear boundary between the two Parishes. The site is within the Stowmarket Area Action plan, is marketed by the developers as Stowmarket and residents will look to Stowmarket Town Council for their services and amenities. Stowmarket Town Councils submission is not about a larger Parish seeking to land grab another Parishes land, it is about what they consider is best for the new residents of that housing, it is well-reasoned, and a balanced view based on community cohesion and provides a compelling case as to why the area that they outline should form part of Stowmarket Parish. Logically they should be residents and electors within Stowmarket.

Onehouse Parish Councils representation really makes no sense if they wish to curtail encroachment and maintain a clear boundary of housing development between the two Parishes. They objected to the planning applications for the affected housing on this basis, whereas Stowmarket Town Council recognised that the land had been allocated within the Stowmarket Area Action plan and accordingly supported the principle of development. If their argument is accepted how does this aim to support Community cohesion? Logically in future how could they oppose any further development in between the area in question and their own main village? There will be a village of two halves with no connection between those two halves.

In Summary, my view as a County Councillor is very strongly in support for Stowmarket Town Council views.

## Penny Otton – Suffolk County Councillor

### REVIEW OF PARISH BOUNDARIES; ONEHOUSE/ STOWMARKET

The 500 (approx.) new homes on Union Road have been entirely built within the parish of Onehouse.

It is the responsibility of the developers if they have misled the owners that they reside in Stowmarket.

It is essential that Onehouse retains its rural identity and should be congratulated on working hard to protect the green open space by working with Mid Suffolk district council and the relevant developers. Including the Paupers Graves and the new amenities which will serve not just Stowmarket but the surrounding rural communities.

Onehouse has of course set its budgets on the understanding that their proportion of the council tax will be to include those properties on Union road. As the county councillor I succeeded in lowering the speed limit on Union road due to the increase in proposed new developments shown to be part of the Thedwastre \south division.

The residents of Union Road should not be faced with additional excessive rise in their council tax if they are now moved into the parish of Stowmarket, especially in light of the current financial situation for many families.



I can see no reason to change the parish boundaries and therefore I support Onehouse parish council that there should be no change.

Yours sincerely

Cllr penny Otton. Suffolk county council



# BATTISFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Sarah Meech, Parish Council Clerk

Democratic Services  
Mid Suffolk District Council  
Endeavour House  
8 Russell Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP1 2BX

12<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Change of settlement boundary**

Battisford Parish Council had an extraordinary planning meeting on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018 due to an outline planning application submission for the erection of 10 dwellings (application reference – DC/18/03072). The plot for the 10 dwellings is located within the settlement boundary of Combs; however, Combs is some distance from the prospective building plot. The hamlet of Little Finborough separates the exit of Combs village with the entrance to Battisford village, the distance of the division being approximately 0.82 miles.

Battisford Parish Council are writing for your consideration to change the boundary in order for the Bowl Road plot to be included within the settlement boundary of Battisford instead of Combs. It is felt that as the proposed development is on the very edge of current dwellings at Bowl Road and you have to drive through Little Finborough to get to Combs it makes sense for the boundary to be included within the Battisford settlement boundary rather than Combs. The prospective plot being on the very periphery of current dwellings on Bowl Road will also be making use of amenities and infrastructure that is currently provided by Battisford.

A site layout and plan of the plot is attached for your information.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Sarah Meech  
Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer  
Battisford Parish Council

# Combs Parish Community Governance Review

---

As part of the community governance review, Battsiford Parish Council has submitted the following points:

1. "To restate the Bowl Meadow development as part of Battsiford Parish."
2. "Bildeston Road between Little Finbrough (sic) and Battsiford Tye is currently a disconnected part of Combs; access to the rest of Combs by road passes through Little Finborough in one direction and Battsiford in the other.

This section of road should be re-allocated to either Battsiford or Little Finborough or shared equally of Little Finborough and Battsiford Tye"

Combs Parish Council has been asked for its views which are as follows:

## **1. Bowl Meadow Restatement**

We can see the logic of restating Bowl Meadow as part of Battsiford (although its location was well understood at the planning and subsequent development stages.) We also understand that a previous request has been turned down. Nonetheless we would not wish to stand in the way should the affected residents opt for restatement.

## **2. Re-allocation of Bildeston Road**

We do not see any reason to reallocate the road. There are many local examples of roads crossing outlying parish boundaries: such features are legacies from boundary designations stretching back through hundreds of years. We do not believe that the simple feature of a short stretch of highway passing across a neighbouring boundary in itself constitutes a substantive argument for historical boundary change: this view, which we regard as respectful of local tradition, informs our own decision not to have made an equally valid claim to an identical situation near Fenns Farm.

## **Combs Green**

In addition to responding to these proposals, Combs Parish would like to ask if consideration could be given to removing the inconsistency in Combs Green: despite being in the same cul de sac, some houses in the road are within the boundary of Combs while others are in Little Finborough. As all residents in the road benefit from the Combs parish newsletter, and have been included in surveys to guide the work of the council, it is suggested that the boundary be moved to include all the houses in Combs Green within the parish of Combs.

# ONEHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL

*A member of Suffolk Association of Local Councils*

Clerk: Mrs Peggy Fuller,

Chair: Mrs J Copping

19 August 2023

Elections

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

Endeavour House

8 Russell Road

Ipswich IP1 2BX

Dear Sirs

## **Mid Suffolk District Council Community Governance Review Draft Recommendations A review of Parish electoral arrangements under the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

Thank you for the opportunity to update our submission.

Stowmarket Town Council again has made representation to Mid Suffolk District Council for a review of our boundary with no consultation with Onehouse Parish Council.

Onehouse Parish Council, has already experienced a no-consultation, no recompense, enforced change to our parish boundary, and are concerned that this practice is becoming common practice, showing no respect to either the Parish Council or residents of our parish.

There are the recent additions of the Hopkins Homes and Bloor Homes sites South of Union Road, Onehouse generating an additional 500 (approximately) new households; these new developments sit either entirely or the majority in Onehouse Parish.

We have for many years asked for the identity of the Parish to remain intact, as a rural country village. To this end, after working with Taylor Wimpey and the Chilton Leys development we have agreed that the green open space adjacent to the Paupers Graves (already owned by Onehouse Parish Council) will be adopted by the parish and developed in to a communal recreational space.

This rural amenity supporting health and wellbeing will benefit both residents of Onehouse Parish and surrounding Stowmarket households. In order to manage and maintain this amenity the precept from the developments within our boundary will be vital. There needs to be recognition of this development, and the needs to safeguard the ability for this to be realised.

The current boundary surrounding Stowmarket has defined the town and neighbouring parishes adequately for centuries giving each community their own identity.

There has been development throughout the years across the country, without the need to redefine parish boundaries. Diminishing parish boundaries diminishes not only their identity but shows little respect for the communities that live there, which is why most major urban development does not deem it necessary to review ancient respected boundaries i.e. The City of London defines each parish boundary through boroughs etc. and nearer to home Kesgrave and Martlesham have kept their identity although both were developed to take additional housing for Ipswich.

Considering changing the parish boundary at every additional development would result in unfortunate interlaying parishes disappearing completely; where would it end? When Stowmarket meets Bury St Edmunds?

The argument regarding disparity of council tax payments set by differing parish councils does not alter boundaries in other urban areas; there is always a boundary around each area defining the applicable rates which is apparent on purchase of the property.

The parish of Stowmarket would not provide any additional support to additional development, as the majority of residential services are provided not by the Town Council but District and County – such as refuse collection, highways, policing, street lighting etc. Therefore the argument that any additional development would relate in additional expense for Stowmarket Town Council is unjustified.

Increasing the electoral area of Stowmarket would further disadvantage Onehouse Parish on representation of the more rural needs, and add to the inequalities we currently experience.

We therefore ask that the request from Stowmarket Town Council to again change our Parish boundary is rejected; if there is to be any change then both developments in Union Road should fully be in the parish of Onehouse.

We look forward to communication on your final decision regarding this matter; we would welcome a more tailored consultation process involving direct communications in respect to our parish boundary.

Yours sincerely.

***P A Fuller***

Clerk to Onehouse Parish Council.



Ifty Ali  
Interim Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

17<sup>th</sup> August, 2023

Dear Ifty

**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Please find enclosed with this letter, the representations of Stowmarket Town Council regarding the Community Governance Review. This comprises:

- a. A letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2022;
- b. A submission on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2022; and
- c. A leaflet providing images of the development on 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2023

I trust that this is helpful in meeting each and every requirement of the Government guidance on conducting Community Governance Reviews.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Blackburn". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**David Blackburn BA (Hons) MBA ACIS CiLCA**  
Town Clerk



Edward McCreadie  
Corporate Manager - Electoral Services and Land Charges  
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils

24<sup>th</sup> May, 2022

Dear Edward

## **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

We are grateful for the opportunity to make representations in respect of the Community Governance Review of Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

### **Introduction**

The Town Council has referred to the following in submitting its proposals:

- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- Guidance on Conducting Community Governance Reviews published by the Department for Communities and Local Government Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010.
- The Mid Suffolk Local Plan 2006, the Stowmarket Area Action Plan 2013 and the emerging new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

It has also referred to Stowmarket Town Council's own policy position with regard to boundary reviews which is as follows:

- a. That where new development originates from, and forms a natural extension of a village outside of Stowmarket, it should be considered as forming part of that village community; and
- b. That where new development originates from and forms a natural extension of Stowmarket, it should be considered as forming as part of Stowmarket.

A cross-party group of Councillors has met to develop the Town Council's proposals and they were approved, unanimously, at a full Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

### **Representations**

#### **Town Warding Arrangements**

You will be aware that a Community Governance Review of Stowmarket was undertaken by Mid Suffolk District Council in 2014. This resulted in the creation of four town wards for the Chilton area, Cedars Park area, Combs Ford area and the

Milton House | Milton Road South | Stowmarket | Suffolk | IP14 1EZ

historical centre of Stowmarket. Subsequently, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, conducted a review of the District Council's electoral arrangements in 2018. This resulted in a change from four to six Town Council wards, which were contested for the first time at the local government elections in May 2019. A further review of Suffolk County Council's electoral arrangements commenced in 2020. The draft recommendations for that review include a proposal to divide Stowmarket, into seven Town Council wards.

The Town Council still believes that the warding arrangements proposed by the Town Council and approved by Mid Suffolk District Council in 2014, provide the best warding solution for Stowmarket. However, the Town Council recognises that a request to re-open this matter through the present Community Governance Review would be unlikely to result in a return to four Town Council wards. Therefore, the Town Council is not making any proposals in respect of the warding of Stowmarket as part of the current process.

### **Town Boundary**

The Town Council has reviewed the commercial and residential development that is taking place in, and around, Stowmarket. As a result of this, the Town Council requests that the Community Governance Review of Stowmarket focusses upon the development taking place on the western edge of Stowmarket as it believes that there is a compelling case for changing the town boundary in the area of Union Road.

Stowmarket Town Council and Onehouse Parish Council have agreed previously on the need to maintain green space between their respective town and village settlements. Indeed, this was also recorded in SAAP policy 6.2 of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan which emphasises the "contribution made to the area by the gap between Stowmarket and Onehouse."

Development is now taking place on the edge of Stowmarket off Union Road. The site is bordered by Finborough Road to the south and Starhouse Lane to the west. This implements the proposals contained within planning application 4455/16 for 300 dwellings and planning application DC/20/01110 for a further 146 dwellings. It forms a substantial residential development immediately adjacent to the town's existing boundary. The consequence of development is that there is no longer separation, in the form of green space, between Stowmarket and Onehouse.

The Town Council believes that the development provides a natural extension of Stowmarket and that the town boundary should be moved accordingly down to the River Rat, which forms the northern boundary of Great Finborough parish. This would provide a readily identifiable boundary for the town. From the point that the river reaches the B1115 at Burford Bridge, the town boundary should continue northwards along the eastern edge of the B1115 and up along the eastern boundary of Starhouse Lane to Union Road.

Section 3 of the Guidance on Conducting a Community Governance Review includes a number of provisions which support the above proposal. In particular, it is noted that:

- Paragraph 52 requires that Community Governance Reviews are "reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area."



We suggest that the character and scale of the new development is more appropriate to an urban settlement than a village community. Access to the site will be achieved predominantly, from the town's roads and the residents will look to Stowmarket for its services.

- Paragraph 53 requires "principal councils to take into account a number of influential factors, including:
  - the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
  - the impact upon the size, population and boundaries of a local community parish."

We suggest that the creation of a large housing development with little in the way of connectivity to a village centre, over half a mile away, does not offer community cohesion.

We also wish to avoid a situation where the continuous urban area of Stowmarket is divided around its edges into neighbouring villages which would clearly make no sense at all.

- Paragraph 59 refers "to the need for parishes reflecting distinctive and recognisable communities of interest with their own sense of identity."

Onehouse Parish Council objected to the grant of planning permission for the Union Road development, whereas Stowmarket Town Council supported the proposals subject to appropriate planning conditions. The proposal for this development was objected to by Onehouse Parish Council as a development that would "erode the identity of Onehouse village." We agree with the assertion made by Onehouse Parish Council that the development is not in keeping with the identity of Onehouse - and that it should form part of Stowmarket.

- Paragraph 64 refers "to some local councils having the power to do more for their local communities than others." The 2007 Act provided a power of well-being which had been updated by the Localism Act 2011 to provide a general power of competence.

Stowmarket Town Council has adopted the General Power of Competence and, as per the guidance, has wider powers to do more for local communities than others.

- Paragraph 65 refers to the Local Council Award Scheme and acknowledges that Councils which were well-managed and good at representing local views are in a better position to work closely with partner authorities to take more responsibility for shaping their area's development and running its services.

Stowmarket Town Council has achieved Quality Gold accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme, being one of only 58 nationally of over 9,000 Town and Parish Councils that have achieved the award.

The Town Council has also considered the land to the north of Union Road. You will be aware that there have been many meetings held between local stakeholders about the Chilton Leys (Northfield View) Development and different ideas and

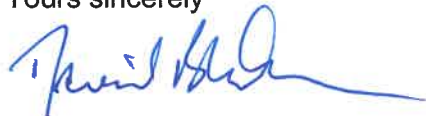
suggestions shared for the land on the corner of Union Road and Starhouse Lane. The proposals have included variously, the provision of a cricket pitch, football pitch, athletics track, open space and residential development. Based upon the information available to the Town Council as of the date of this submission, the Town Council requests that the town boundary should extend north of Union Road along the eastern edge of Starhouse Lane up to the 90 degree bend in the road where it will meet the existing town boundary. This would consolidate all of the area from the River Rat along Starhouse Lane to the point where it meets the existing town boundary on the western edge of Chilton Leys (Northfield View), thus dealing with this whole area within the current Community Governance review process. The proposals would encompass the Stow Lodge Centre which was overlooked in the 2014 Community Governance Review.

### **Implementation of Proposals**

We have given notice previously to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), through the consultations undertaken on District Council electoral arrangements and Suffolk County Council electoral arrangements, that the Town Council has been seeking a Community Governance Review to consider the town's boundaries. The Commission confirmed to us that the town's boundaries should be considered firstly, through a Community Governance Review. Any boundary change would then need to be dealt with by the Commission as a short supplementary review to make the County, District and Town Council boundary co-terminous. It is our understanding that any boundary change would need to be recorded as a finding of the Community Governance Review but that the implementation date may, because of the work of the LGBCE, need to be at a date when the boundaries of the County, District and Town Councils are properly reconciled as being one and the same.

In closing, we believe that we have developed our proposals and supporting statements in accordance with the guidance issued by government and LGBCE. We hope that the above information is self-explanatory but we would be pleased to help further if you require any more information from us.

Yours sincerely



**David Blackburn**  
**Town Clerk**

# Community Governance Review

## Stowmarket Boundary

Page 19



HOME DEVELOPMENTS ▾ PROPERTY SEARCH HOPKINS HOMES GALLERY ABOUT US ▾ CONTACT

**MILL GROVE**  
STOWMARKET, SUFFOLK

ABOUT PROPERTIES SITEPLAN LOCAL AREA SPECIFICATION DOWNLOAD BROCHURE CONTACT

☎ 01449 703916 🕒 Open Thurs to Mon, 10am - 5pm ✉ Contact Us

**MILL GROVE IS BEING DEVELOPED BY HOPKINS HOMES IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE FLAGSHIP GROUP OFFERING STYLISH NEW HOMES IN THE DELIGHTFUL MARKET TOWN OF STOWMARKET.**

🗨 Hello, I'd like to help you find what you're looking for.

⚙️

# Contents

Section 1:	Summary of Proposal	4
Section 2:	Planning	6
Section 3:	Marketing	9
Section 4:	Services	10
Section 5:	Community Identity	11
Section 6:	Community Cohesion & Distinctive Communities	12
Section 7:	Local Council Capacity - General Power of Competence	13
Section 8:	Local Council Capacity - Local Councils Award Scheme	13
Section 9:	Financial Implications	14
Section 10:	Additional Comments	14
Section 11:	Legal Provisions	15
Section 12:	References	15

# Section 1: Summary of Proposal

It is proposed that the extensive development of 446 new homes to the south of Union Road should form part of Stowmarket.

The proposal to incorporate the Union Road development in Stowmarket, fulfils the criteria contained within the Guidance on conducting Community Governance Reviews published by the Government in respect of the following criteria:

- ✓ **Community Identity**
- ✓ **Community Cohesion**
- ✓ **Distinctive Communities**
- ✓ **General Power of Competence**
- ✓ **Local Councils Award Scheme**
- ✓ **Supported throughout Planning Process by Stowmarket Town Council.**

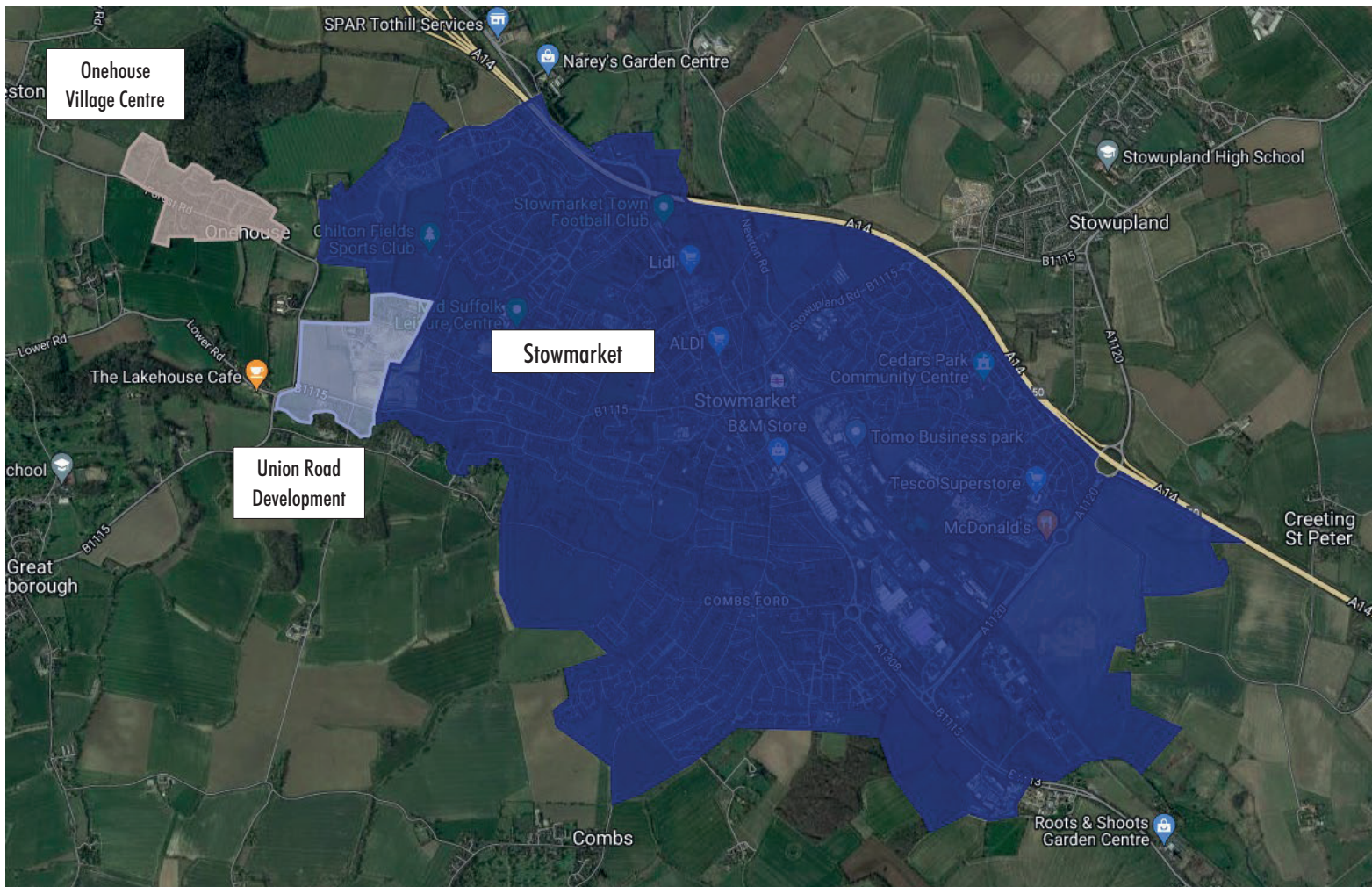
The Union Road development forms a natural extension of Stowmarket as it is **immediately adjacent** to other residential properties in Stowmarket. The size and scale of the development will create a distinct residential area that has no relationship with the village centre of Onehouse which lies some distance away.

The new Union Road development will have **an estimated population of 1,053 people which is higher than the existing population of the whole of Onehouse**. In terms of preserving the respective identities of Stowmarket and Onehouse, it would seem wholly inappropriate to attach this new development to a rural village and more than double its size, when it forms a natural extension of the urban and suburban community of Stowmarket. It is reasonable to assume that a new population of over 1,000 people will look for local amenities and services – Onehouse has a village hall whereas Stowmarket has a large range of suppliers of goods and services, supermarkets, clubs, groups and organisations, employers, schools, health facilities and cultural assets.

This large housing development on the edge of Stowmarket has been **supported** consistently by Stowmarket Town Council. On the other hand, Onehouse Parish Council **objected** to the planning application for Union Road on the basis that it would **“erode the identity of Onehouse village.”** Given that “community identity” is a key criterion within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Government Guidance, any outcome other than to include the Union Road development in Stowmarket would appear to be contrary to the relevant legal provisions and the guidance issued by Government regarding the objectives in undertaking Community Governance Reviews.

# Plan of Development Site

The plan below demonstrates the proximity of the site to Stowmarket and that the 446 new homes create an extension to Stowmarket rather than having a relationship with the village centre of Onehouse:



## Union Road Development

Onehouse Parish Council **objected** to the grant of planning permission for the Union Road development, whereas Stowmarket Town Council **supported** the proposals.

The proposal for this development was objected to by Onehouse Parish Council as a development that would **“erode the identity of Onehouse village”** and that there was a **“need for continued separation from Stowmarket.”**

We agree with the view expressed by Onehouse Parish Council that the development is not in keeping with the identity of Onehouse - and that it should form part of Stowmarket.

## Forest Road Development

A planning application for 20 new homes was submitted in 2022 on a 3.4-acre site on land south of Forest Road in Onehouse.

Onehouse Parish Council **objected** to the grant of planning permission on the grounds that:

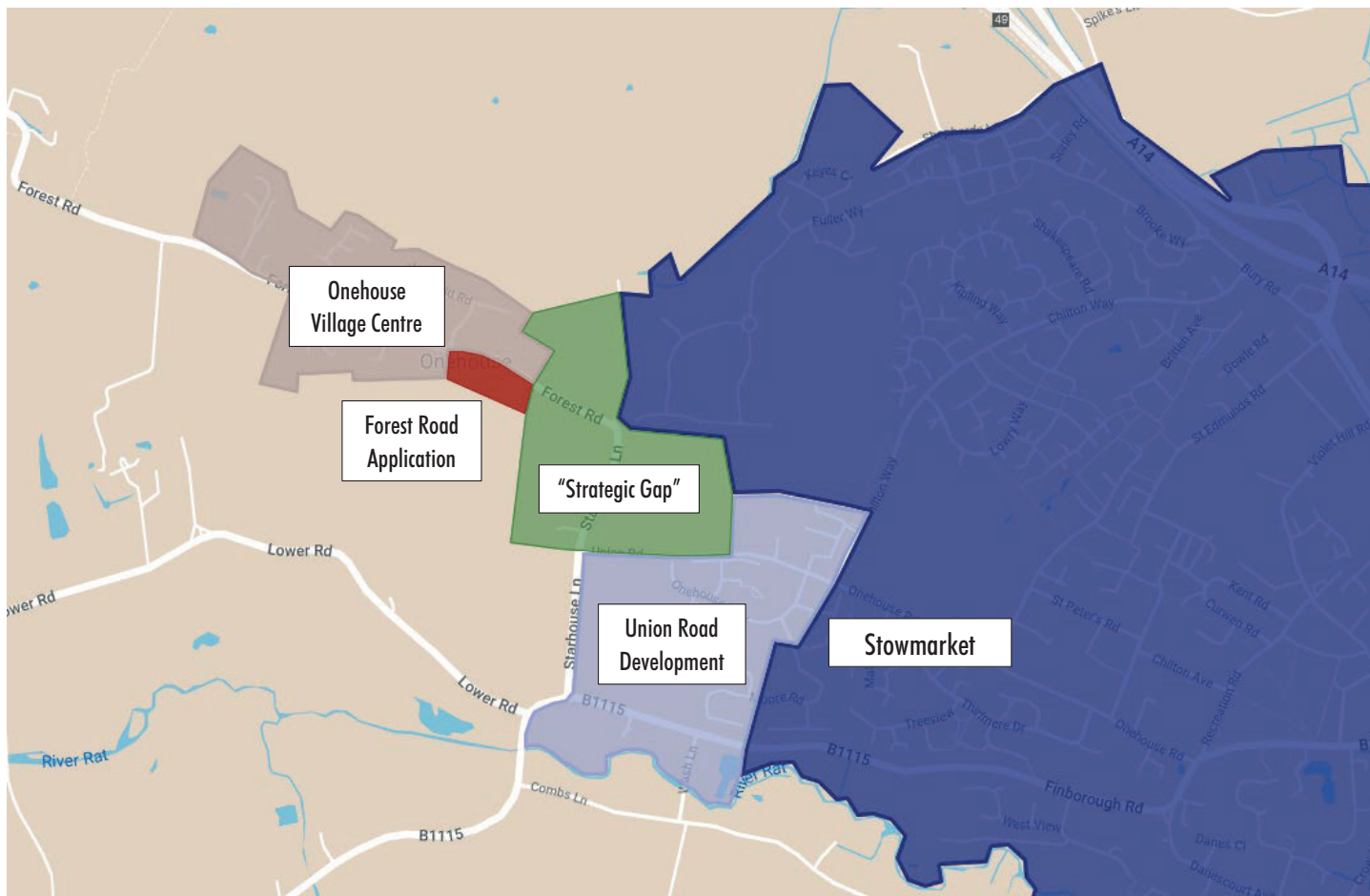
**“The development will diminish the strategic gap between Stowmarket and Onehouse.”**

Again, we agree with the view expressed by Onehouse Parish Council, that the gap between the urban community of Stowmarket and the rural community of Onehouse should be protected. This provides further support to the view that the Union Road development should form part of Stowmarket and that a green buffer should be maintained between the extensive development of Union Road and the village centre of Onehouse.

# Plan of site off Forest Road

## Planning Application opposed by Onehouse Parish Council

This shows the “strategic gap” between Onehouse and Stowmarket that Onehouse Parish Council wishes to preserve. The strategic gap reinforces the need for the Union Road development to be part of Stowmarket.





## Planning Policy

In addition, the Mid Suffolk Place Maps relating to the Joint Local Plan which were published in July 2019, refer to development in towns, villages and hamlets. The Union Road development is identified as an allocation for Stowmarket.

### Mid Suffolk District Council Place Maps

#### **LA036 – Allocation: Land south of Union Road, Stowmarket**

**Site Size – 23.3ha**

**Approximately 400 dwellings (with associated infrastructure)**

**The development shall be expected to comply with the following:**

- I. The relevant policies set out in the Joint Local Plan;**
- II. A full assessment of increased discharge on the watercourse, and relevant mitigation measures;**
- III. Contributions to the satisfaction of the LPA, towards primary school and secondary school provision;**
- IV. Contributions, to the satisfaction of the LPA, towards additional Household Waste Recycling provision;**
- V. Contributions to the satisfaction of the LPA, towards healthcare provision;**
- VI. Footway improvements and the need to consider and mitigate any impact on level crossings will be required.**

# Section 3: Marketing

The site has been marketed as providing new homes at **Mill Grove at Stowmarket** and buyers are being informed that they were moving to Stowmarket rather than Onehouse.

The screenshot shows the Rightmove website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with options like Buy, Rent, House Prices, Find Agent, Commercial, Inspire, Overseas, and a Sign in button. Below this is a search bar containing 'Hopkins Homes' and various filters for price, beds, and property type. The main content area displays 7 results, sorted by Highest Price. The featured property is 'Mill Grove, Drury Close, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1FS', a 'NEW HOME' with 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, priced at £340,000. The listing includes a kitchen image and a description: 'The Nedging is a gorgeous new home with a SOUTH-WEST FACING GARDEN, a GARAGE and PARKING. There is a LARGE OPEN PLAN kitchen and dining area. Plus, a separate STUDY - perfect if you work from home. There is also THREE DOUBLE bedrooms, the Master bedroom...'. The Hopkins Homes logo and contact number 01449 701236 are also visible. A sidebar on the right contains the Hopkins Homes logo, contact details, and a calculator tool for borrowing.

Please also refer to the image on the front cover of this publication for further marketing information.

# Section 4: Services

Stowmarket is identified in the Core Strategy and emerging Joint Local Plan as a town providing key services that is capable of accepting new homes.

The planning application for the Union Road development identifies that new residents will look to Stowmarket for their services rather than from Onehouse.

The Planning Statement refers to the site being a sustainable location for development and states that:

**“Stowmarket is identified as a Town in the Core Strategy, reflecting its role in providing key services”**

(para 7.13 refers)

It continues:

**“The site itself is located close to local services. Services such as the post office, public house, doctors’ surgery and pharmacy, hospitals, libraries, primary and secondary schools and sixth forms, retail, entertainment and cultural facilities are available in Stowmarket, within convenient proximity to the site.”**

(para 7.15 refers)

The closest amenities with regard to the local primary school, high school, retail, post office, church, doctor’s surgery and pharmacy are all identified in the Planning Statement as being found in Stowmarket.

Stowmarket Town Council were consulted and supported the improvement of infrastructure for the site before development began and the new crossing and foot and cycle ways are taking residents toward the town centre and the facilities that they will use.

Therefore, there is a collective recognition that the new residents of the Union Road development will receive services from Stowmarket and that it is reasonable to conclude that it should form part of the community of Stowmarket.

# Section 5: Community Identity

Paragraph 52 of the Government Guidance requires that:

“Community Governance Reviews are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area.”

The character and scale of the new development to the south of Union Road is appropriate to an urban settlement rather than a village community. Access to the site will be achieved, predominantly, from the town’s roads and the residents will look to Stowmarket for their amenities and services.

There will be 446 new homes in this development. Taking the national average of people per household in 2021 (outside of London) was 2.36:-

By multiplying the number of homes by the average number of people per household the sum is as follows:

$$446 \times 2.36 = \mathbf{1,053 \text{ new residents}}$$

**Therefore, the Union Road estate when completed will have more residents than the whole of the existing village.**

One of the main purposes of Parliamentary Boundary Reviews, Local Government Boundary Reviews and Community Governance is to review boundaries. They are frequently changed to reflect community identities in response to new development and to achieve electoral equality across constituencies and wards. For example, the Gateway 14 commercial site was moved into Stowmarket from Creting St Peter as the scale of development was recognised by all as being more befitting of a town than a village. It is suggested that similarly, there is a compelling case to amend the ward boundary given the scale of residential development so that the Union Road site comes within Stowmarket.

# Section 6: Community Cohesion and Distinctive Communities

Paragraph 53 of the Government Guidance requires that principal councils take into account a number of influential factors, including:

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the impact upon the size, population and boundaries of a local community parish.

Paragraph 59 of the Government Guidance refers to community governance arrangements having regard:

“to the need for parishes reflecting distinctive and recognisable communities of interest with their own sense of identity.”

It is suggested that the creation of a large housing development with little in the way of connectivity to a village centre, half a mile away, does not offer community cohesion.

Discussions previously between the District and Town Councils have shown a willingness to move the town boundary to incorporate development at the edge of the town within Stowmarket. This has been at the heart of the thinking of the District Council and Town Council in wishing to prevent Stowmarket from becoming a “doughnut” - with an urban community at the centre of the built-up area, village communities immediately adjacent to its edge and **no discernible boundary between village and town.**

The Town Council believes that the proposed Union Road development provides a natural extension of Stowmarket and that the town boundary should be moved accordingly down to the River Rat, which forms the northern boundary of Great Finborough parish. This would provide a readily identifiable boundary for the town. From the point that the river reaches the B1115 at Burford Bridge, the town boundary should continue northwards along the eastern edge of the B1115 and up along the eastern boundary of Starhouse Lane to Union Road.

# Section 7: Local Council Capacity – General Power of Competence

Paragraph 64 of the Government Guidance refers:

“to some local councils having the power to do more for their local communities than others.”

The 2007 Act provided a power of well-being which has subsequently been updated by the Localism Act 2011 to provide a general power of competence. Stowmarket Town Council has adopted the General Power of Competence and, as per the guidance, has wider powers to do more for local communities than other Parish Councils.

# Section 8: Local Council Capacity – Local Councils Award Scheme

Paragraph 65 of the Government Guidance refers to:

“Wider initiatives such as the Quality Parish Scheme... help to give a greater understanding of securing effective and convenient local government. In such cases, parish and town councils which are well managed and good at representing local views will be in a better position to work closely with partner authorities to take more responsibility for shaping their area’s development and running its services.”

Stowmarket Town Council has achieved Quality Gold accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme, being one of just over 50 from over 9,000 Town and Parish Councils nationally that have achieved the award. The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that Stowmarket Town Council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Therefore, it has a proven record for representing the local community effectively and delivering large community projects and events.



# Section 9: Financial Implications

There has been a dialogue in the past between the two Councils and at that time, there was a common understanding of Stowmarket Town Council's policy position with regard to boundary reviews which is as follows:

- a. That where new development originates from, and forms a natural extension of a village outside of Stowmarket, it should be considered as forming part of that village community; and
- b. That where new development originates from and forms a natural extension of Stowmarket, it should be considered as forming as part of Stowmarket.

Onehouse Parish Council were also clear that they were looking at new housing as a way of funding improvements to Onehouse Village Hall.

These matters are outside the scope of the review and hence, not material considerations. However, Stowmarket Town Council would wish to place on record that it would be willing to work with Mid Suffolk District Council and Onehouse Parish Council over the use of Community Infrastructure Levy funding to support local amenities including the Village Hall in Onehouse.

## Section 10: Additional Comments

We are unsure if our proposal for extending the town boundary along the north side of Union Road to encompass Stow Lodge, the Stow Lodge Centre and Chilton Meadows Care Home which was overlooked in the 2014 Community Governance Review has been considered as it is not referred to within the draft recommendations. We would request that this is done so as part of the current review. From interactions we have with members of the public, it is evident that these facilities are widely regarded as being in Stowmarket.

# Section 11: Legal Provisions

Section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides a power for a principal council to undertake a Community Governance Review.

Section 93 of the Act states that the principal council has duties to comply with in undertaking a review. In particular, Section 93(4) states that:

The principal council **must have regard to** the need to secure that community governance within the area under review that –

- (a) reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
- (b) is effective and convenient.

On the basis of this duty, and the guidance issued by the Government which provides greater detail with regard to matters of community identity, distinctiveness and governance and local council capacity it is suggested that the most appropriate interpretation of the law and guidance would be to incorporate the large Union Road development within Stowmarket.

# Section 12: References

The Town Council has referred to the following in submitting its proposals:

- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- Guidance on Conducting Community Governance Reviews published by the Department for Communities and Local Government Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010.
- The Mid Suffolk Local Plan 2006, the Stowmarket Area Action Plan 2013 and the emerging new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Its own policy position with regard to boundary reviews which is as follows:

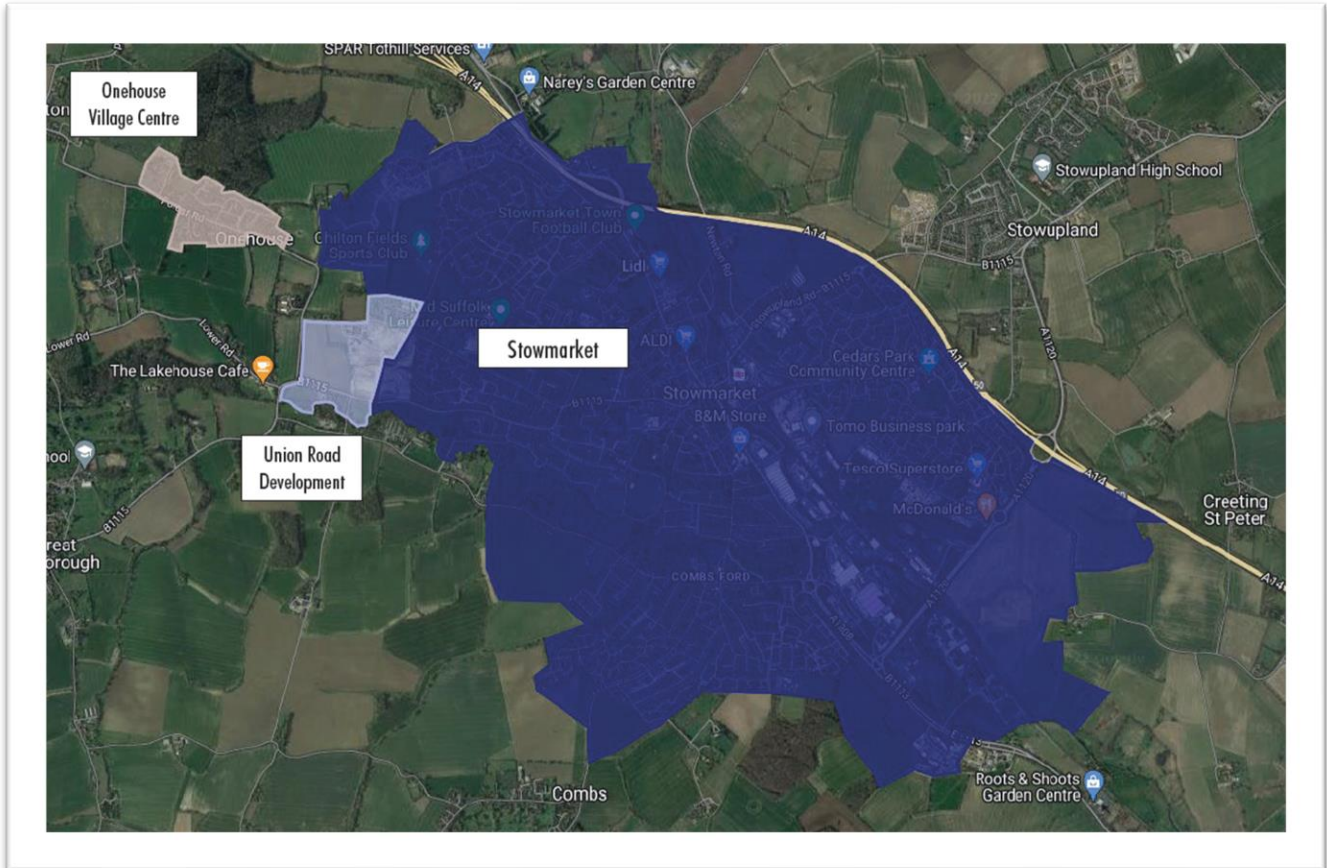
- a. That where new development originates from, and forms a natural extension of a village outside of Stowmarket, it should be considered as forming part of that village community; and
- b. That where new development originates from and forms a natural extension of Stowmarket, it should be considered as forming as part of Stowmarket.

A cross-party group of Councillors has met to develop and agree the Town Council's proposals which are now submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council.



Recent Images of Site Development on Stowmarket boundary

Reference Map



**Image 1: Scale of Building**



This image demonstrates the scale and urban character of the build taking place in accordance with the contents of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

**Image 2: Proximity of New and Current Residential Properties**



This image demonstrates the position of new housing and existing housing on Union Road.

# Agenda Item 15

**MSDC COUNCIL – 26 OCTOBER 2023**

**ITEM 15 – COUNCILLOR APPOINTMENTS**

**APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS:**

**SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP**

Sarah Mansel

Gilly Morgan

James Patchett

David Penny

Miles Row

Teresa Davis (Portfolio holder)

This page is intentionally left blank