

Appendix D – Mid Suffolk – Additional Information – Project M21-03 - Elmswell Community Primary School - (from the Ringfenced Fund and Local Infrastructure Fund).

18th October 2021

1. Reason for this additional information

- 1.1 The Technical Assessment of the bid provided in Appendix B of the report makes recommendation to Cabinet to approve the CIL Bid for £1,560,006.21 as per the bid application.
- 1.2 Through the process of the planning permission for the school expansion (a County Council decision) and through the process of the CIL Expenditure Framework, this project was objected¹ to by the Parish Council, Ward Councillors and County Councillor in relation to two key aspects of the bid:
- whether the existing school site is suitable for the planned extension, or if a new school site in Elmswell should be considered.
 - whether the belts of woodland to the southeast and west of the school site is too restrictive and should not be considered as usable areas for the school as outdoor space.
- 1.3 Regarding the latter concern raised, the County Council have confirmed that the headteacher of the primary school supports the project of expansion and has confirmed that the woodland is used currently to deliver curriculum activities and subjects such as science. The woodland area also enables the school to deliver Forest School on site. The benefits of the new all-weather artificial grass pitch will also offer the opportunity to deliver the outdoor PE curriculum throughout the year. It is therefore understood from the County Council and the school that the project of expansion meets the education standards and would be of benefit to the school as it runs currently and to deal with additional pupils in the future.

As part of this point raised by the Parish Council, there was also the report presented at SCC DRC committee on 23 September 2021 which referenced the site area as being 0.6 ha. This point has since been verified with the County Council and the case officer dealing with the planning application and it was confirmed that this was a typographical error, and that the site area is 1.6ha, and not 0.6ha as stated in the committee report.

- 1.4 The first concern raised requires more background information to fully understand the implications, this is detailed below.

¹ As the comments received fall counter to the recommendation these are attached at the end of this report.

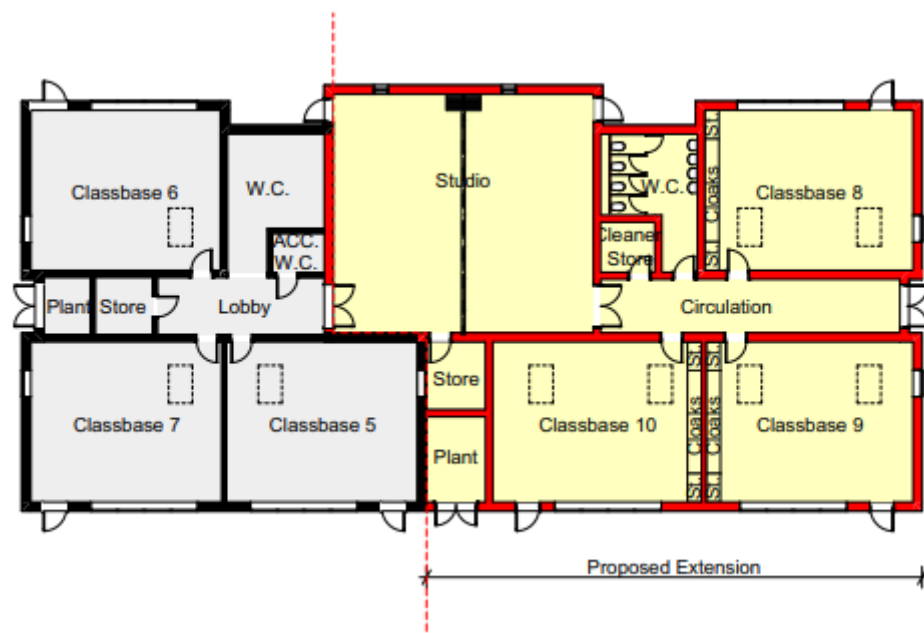
2. The planning context of the CIL bid and project of expanding the Elmswell Community Primary School

2.1 The project will provide additional accommodation at the school to allow the Published Admission Number (PAN) to increase from 1.5FE (Fulltime Education) to 2FE (315 to 420 places) to ensure there are sufficient school places for local children. The need for expansion is driven by housing growth within the school catchment.

2.2 Elmswell Community Primary School is a Local Authority Maintained school.

2.3 The project consists of an extension to the existing standalone block which will provide 3 additional classrooms and a studio.

Plan 1: Proposed ground floor plan of the standalone block extension



2.4 The project also includes the reconfiguration of the existing car park to provide 6 additional car parking bays and 60 additional covered scooter spaces. The project also includes the reconfiguration of the outdoor areas of the school, with a new all-weather artificial grass pitch.

Plan 2: Proposed site plan



2.5 Four of the five residential developments in Elmswell which feed into the CIL contributions for the expansion of the school are under construction. The timescale for delivery of the school expansion is September 2022.

Table 1: Planning permissions granted on the basis that the developments would contribute to the primary school expansion

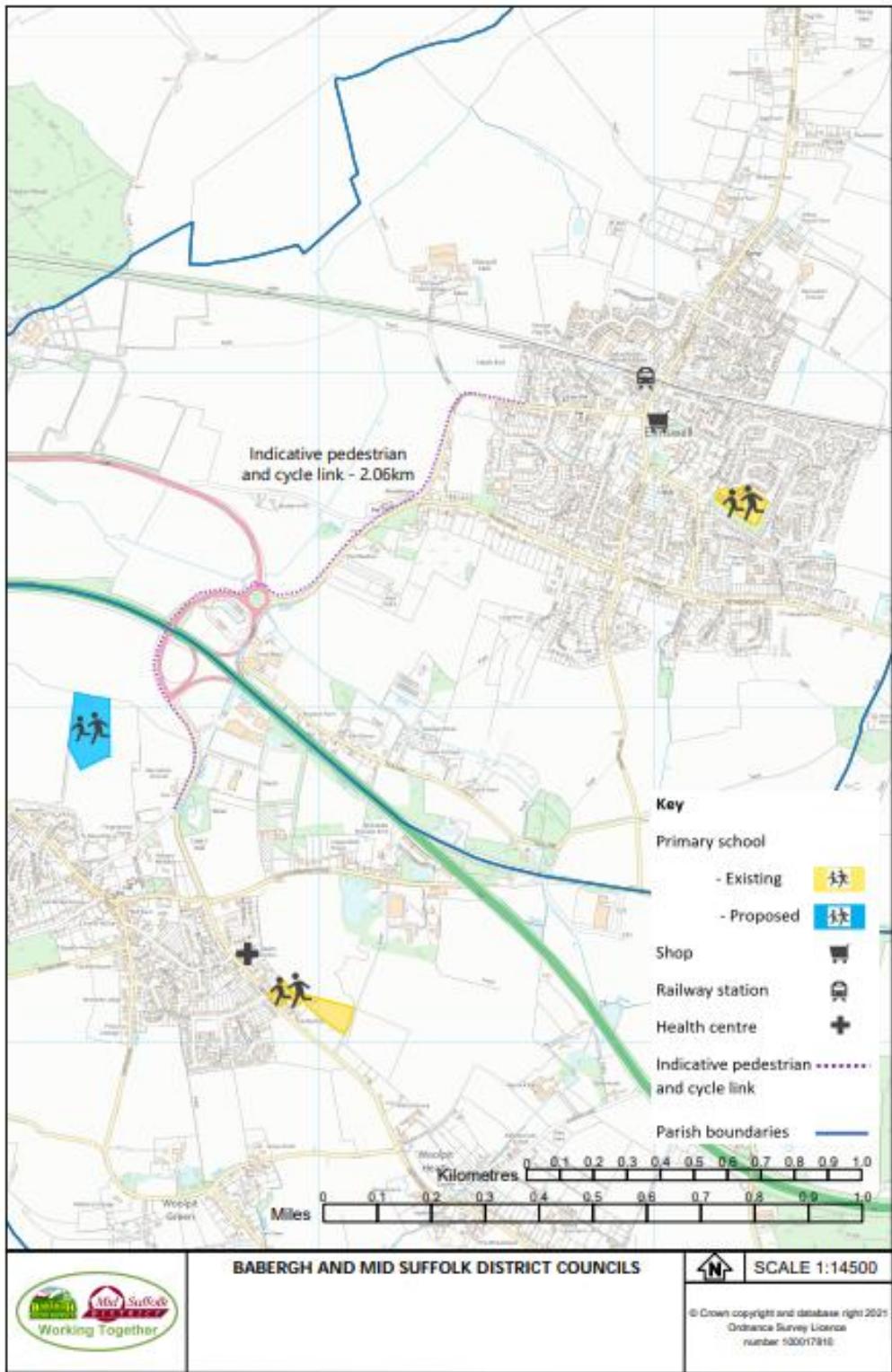
Planning Permissions	Current status
S106	
0846/13/OUT and 3918/15/RES - Elmswell – planning permission for 190 dwellings. S106 secured £664,878.29	Under construction (146 plots completed)
CIL	
3469/16/OUT and DC/18/04267/RES – Elmswell – planning permission for 60 dwellings.	Under construction (0 plots completed but commenced on site)
4911/16/OUT and DC/18/01679/RES - Elmswell – planning permission for 240 dwellings.	Under construction (185 plots completed)
0210/17/OUT and DC/19/02495/RM - Elmswell – planning permission for 106 dwellings.	Under construction (0 plots completed but commenced on site)
4909/16/OUT granted 21/06/2018 for 38 dwellings - Elmswell –	Outline permission granted 21/06/2018. Currently a new outline planning application is awaiting decision (DC/21/02956/OUT) to increase capacity on site from 38 dwellings to 44 dwellings.

2.6 The total cost of the project is £2,224,884.50, which is to be financed through £664,878.29 of s106 and £1,560,006.21 of CIL.

2.7 The education strategy for the school catchment areas of Elmswell and Woolpit to ensure provision can be made to deal with the committed growth from planning permissions and the growth proposed in the Joint Local Plan is to expand Elmswell primary school, retain the existing Woolpit primary school, and provide a new primary school in Woolpit.

3. The education strategy was identified in the Joint Local Plan (JLP) Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document November 2020, Policy LA095 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) September 2020 (evidence base document for the JLP). This strategy was developed with the County Council and is the plan led approach to dealing with the growth identified in the JLP.

Map 1: Joint Local Plan led strategy showing the location of the 2 existing primary schools and the new primary school in Woolpit (including the location of the existing Woolpit Health Centre, location of the rail way station and the indicative route of the propose pedestrian/cycle link connecting Elmswell and Woolpit



4. The new site proposed for the new Woolpit Primary School

4.1 A site for the new primary school in Woolpit is proposed as part of the development site for 300 dwellings (Land Off Bury Road, Woolpit – Outline permission DC/18/04247 granted on 21/08/2020, Reserved Matters application DC/21/01132 is awaiting decision).

Plan 3: Proposed Layout Plan (Reserved Matters application DC/21/01132)



5. The pedestrian and cycle link proposed between Elmswell and Woolpit

5.1 A pedestrian/cycle link is proposed and deliverable to connect the two settlements of Elmswell and Woolpit. Developer contributions have been secured in the form of planning conditions and developer contributions through s278 and s106 agreements.

5.2 The proposed cycle link between Elmswell and Woolpit covers a distance under 2 miles, from Elmswell Railway Station to the Woolpit Health Centre, Heath Road, Woolpit; linking to the existing National Cycle Route 51.

5.3 SCC has estimated the design and construction costs for the cycle link between Elmswell and Woolpit to be approximately £740,000. There are 795 dwellings identified that should contribute to this cost, which works out at £850/dwelling. There are 405 dwellings identified against which contributions are already secured through the planning process, as detailed below. And there are 390 dwellings from JLP allocations that are not yet progressing through the planning application process (405+390=795) but which are anticipated prior to the extended school in Elmswell being forecast as becoming full.

Planning permissions which contribute sections of the Elmswell-Woolpit cycle link:

Section 1 – From Elmswell Rail Station

Existing footways, 30 miles/hr zone, no dedicated cycle way.

Section 2

LA065 - DC/18/02146 (in Elmswell) – Outline for 86 dwellings, Approved at Committee 20/01/2021. S106 and s278 and Planning Conditions to secure land and construction of a section of the 3m wide cycleway/footway from the south east corner of the site, along the frontage of the site on School road, and up to the School Road/Church Road junction, with a secured option to extend the cycle way to the back of the Church.

Total contributions secured through land and construction (estimated at £850 x 86 dwellings = £73,100).

Section 3 – from the St John's Church, Elmswell to Heath Road, Woolpit, secured through the contributions set out below.

DC/19/02656 (in Woolpit) - Outline for 40 dwellings, Approved at Committee 12/05/2021. Developer contribution of £34,000 to be secured through the s106.

DC/20/01677 (in Elmswell) - Outline for 65 dwellings, granted 21/01/2021. £55,250 secured through the s106.

DC/18/04247 (LA095, southern section. In Woolpit) - Outline for 300 dwellings granted on 21/08/2020. £220,000 secured through the s106.

Total contributions secured: £309,250

Remaining expected growth which would also contribute to the cycle link:

In Woolpit:

- LA095, northern section – 200 dwellings from site allocation (200 x £850) = £170,000
- LA097, 30 dwellings x £850 = £25,500

In Elmswell:

- LA064, 60 dwellings x £850 = £51,000
- LA066, 100 dwellings x £850 = £85,000

Total contributions to be secured: £331,500

5.4 The total funding expected from the above is £713,850, the estimated cost of the pedestrian/cycle link is £740,000, therefore there may be a funding gap of £26,150. The final piece of the jigsaw could be financed from CIL.

6. The consideration of a new Primary School in Elmswell

6.1 A parcel of land (Endurance Land) has been suggested to provide land for a new primary school in Elmswell (2.5 ha) and 170 to 200 dwellings. This site is not an identified site allocation in the JLP. The site was discounted in the SHELAA 2020, site reference SS0915 (Land east of Eastern Way, Elmswell), therefore this site has not been factored into the planned growth for infrastructure needs/IDP.

- 6.2 To deliver a new school in Elmswell, 600 additional dwellings would be required, in addition to the existing commitments and JLP planned growth.
- 6.3 The JLP meets the housing need requirements for the Districts as a whole and includes a 20% buffer.
- 6.4 The cost of a new primary school for 420 places (2.2ha) is generally around £8 Million.
- 6.5 If Elmswell primary school was to be relocated, SCC would only receive funding for the new pupils that would be accommodated in the new school, SCC would therefore likely need to borrow the funds to relocate the existing 315 places or find alternative funding means. Elmswell Parish Council have indicated verbally that they would be willing to contribute a substantial sum towards this, but that has not been formalised and would nonetheless still leave a significant funding shortfall.

7. The consideration of timings to provide the required pupil places

- 7.1 SCC has a statutory duty to provide school places.
- 7.2 The capacity of the existing Woolpit Primary School is 210 places. The actual number on roll is in the region of 115 – 120.
- 7.3 Planning approval for the extension of Elmswell Primary School has recently been granted and the project programme requires approval of CIL funding on 1st November to allow the construction contract to be awarded later that month. If this decision is deferred to the December Cabinet, for example, the programme will be delayed to the extent that it will not be complete for September 2022. If the expansion the existing Elmswell school does not take place by September 2022, there is a risk that pupils arising from recent developments will not be able to obtain a place at the local school.

8. Conclusion

- The education strategy for the new primary school in Woolpit, retention of the existing primary school in Woolpit and expansion of Elmswell primary school was identified in the Joint Local Plan (JLP) Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document November 2020, Policy LA095 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) September 2020 (evidence base document for the JLP).
- The delivery on the land for the new primary school is identified through a development site which benefits from Outline planning permission, and Reserved Matters have been submitted.
- The proposed pedestrian/cycle link between Elmswell and Woolpit is deliverable, with most of the funding identified.
- In order to be able to fund and deliver a new primary school in Elmswell, this would require growth above that currently planned to 2037 and there is no certainty that this growth would come forward. It is beyond the needs of the

District's Local Plan and contrary to the strategy that has been agreed by the Councils. Other infrastructure considerations would also need to be taken into account for growth beyond what is considered in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- Planning approval has recently been granted for extension of the existing primary school in Elmswell and the project programme requires approval of CIL funding on 1st November to allow the construction contract to be awarded later that month. If this decision is deferred to the December Cabinet, the programme will be delayed to the extent that it will not be complete for September 2022. Even if the decision were to be delayed for several months, it is not anticipated that doing so would provide sufficient time to provide complete certainty on land available for a new school or funding to deliver it.

9. Comments Received (please refer to paragraph 1.2 above)

9.1 From Elmswell Parish Council

ELMSWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council Peter Dow CAICA

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FAO Tom Barker
Assistant Director Sustainable Communities
Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
IPSWICH
IP1 2BX

By email

7th October 2021

Dear Tom

CIL bid re expansion at Elmswell Community Primary School

Thank you for offering, at yesterday's on-line meeting, the opportunity to present in writing the case on behalf of the community of Elmswell against the granting of CIL funding towards the proposed expansion of built accommodation on the current Oxer Close site.

As previously stated by Elmswell Parish Council and others both at the initial SCC consultation stage and at the Planning Application stage, there is dismay and resentment at this further indication of the lack of strategic planning when considering primary education provision for our children. The beginning of an avalanche of development in the village was forewarned when the Harris Bacon Factory site gained permission for 190 dwellings in 2013. Regardless of the necessity for the very compact school facilities to summarily absorb the extra year groups comprising older, larger and livelier children when the Middle School tier was abandoned, further developments have been granted Planning Permission in Elmswell which portend a 48% uplift in households without proper consideration of the need for a radical re-think of primary education provision if standards are not to be allowed to drift gradually backwards towards the basic minimum of provision and acceptability.

Meanwhile, the community has, itself, invested heavily in making provision for the well-being of its expanding population. Enhancements at the award winning Blackbourne facility, the purchase of and refurbishment / new-build at Wesley and the purchase of the Greene King Tavern site for the creation of a community pub and affordable homes stand the people of Elmswell in at some £2m of investment for the future. Community support for such future-proofing is sound and solid. It contrasts starkly with the make-do-and-mend, hand-to-mouth approach which residents perceive to be reflected in the proposals for our school.

The site is purported to comprise 1.84Ha., just 12% smaller than the recommended size for the facilities proposed. However, this figure includes the substantial Protected tree belt which distorts the figure considerably. The papers to the SCC D&R Committee on 23rd September have the site area at more realistic 0.6 Ha. The reality is cramming and the result can only be seriously detrimental to the education, socialisation and mental wellbeing of generations of our children.

There seems no doubt that the end result will be a school with an enhanced intake but with, it is seriously to be hoped, no further room for expansion. Equally, there seems no doubt that the development pressures on A14 corridor villages such as Elmswell are not going to lessen. Mention has already been made in consideration of the rush of recent housebuilding proposals that the 420 pupil capacity here proposed will not be adequate in the medium-term future and that a new school in Woolpit will be built to take the overflow from Elmswell.

In light of the above, EPC and Ward Members met with Pete Mumford of SCC on 20th July. It was made clear that there are 2 options for an alternative way forward by way of sites for a properly sized school on a properly sized site with room for expansion beyond 420 intake.

Unless and until these options are properly considered, the CIL contribution in question should not be wasted on what is, effectively, a temporary solution which seeks to provide an experience well below that which Elmswell children deserve and which the community of Elmswell expects.

I trust that you can have these views before Cabinet appropriately.

Yours sincerely

Peter Dow

Peter Dow CILCA
Parish Clerk

cc BMSDC Ward Member Cllr Sarah Mansel
BMSDC Ward Member Cllr Helen Geake
SCC Ward Member Cllr Andy Mellen

9.2 From the County Councillor

Elmswell Primary CIL funding



Andrew Mellen (Cllr)

To ● Tom Barker

You forwarded this message on 11/10/2021 14:46.

Reply Reply All Forward

Sun 10/10/20

Dear Tom,

Just a few thoughts following our CIL discussion, hope you pick this up before cabinet briefing on Monday. I'm writing from my District e-mail, but my relevance here is as the County Councillor.

I absolutely understand the professional opinion of Pete Mumford and his team in terms of the school numbers coming up for Elmswell and Woolpit. The disagreement I have with them is that I am not convinced that this is the best, strategic usage of what is a limited pot of CIL public money. Elmswell Primary needs improvements (staff room etc.) whether or not it is extended, it does feel like they have bundled in several improvements in with the new classrooms.

The extension is a short-term fix which just puts off the day when a new school will be required. Although (as Rob Hobbs pointed out) the intention is to provide this in Woolpit along with the 300 home development, Pete Mumford was much less certain about this when he came and discussed this at Elmswell – SCC never say no to an offered site. The community are completely opposed to the idea of children from Elmswell being bussed over the A14 to a new school in Woolpit, and I do think SCC could explore further the possibility of the sites that Elmswell PC have highlighted.

Possibly we can separate out the two issues: 1) the immediate issue of the extension, from 2) the eventual site of a new school. If we could have the possibility of further discussion on 2, and some surety that it wouldn't be compromised by a decision on 1, that would be helpful.

Regards,

Andy Mellen

Green Party District Councillor for Bacton ward

Andrew.Mellen@midsuffolk.gov.uk