Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Examination

SCLP12.33 Woodbridge Town Football Club

1. This note responds to the Inspector’s comments within the first review of the table of modifications that has been prepared by the Council to identify amendments to the plan.

2. Final Draft Local Plan allocates land at Woodbridge Town Football Club for the development of approximately 120 dwellings alongside the provision of equivalent or better provision of football club facilities within a location which is accessible to the community by non-car modes of transport.

3. Question 3.45 of the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions issued in June 2019 related to policy SCLP12.33 Land at Woodbridge Town Football Club and asked “Is paragraph 12.350 consistent with Policy SCLP12.33 in that it refers to the relocated facilities being ‘within the town’? Is this justified?” In responding, the Council explained that the policy is consistent with paragraph 97 of the 2019 NPPF and also proposed a modification for clarity as set out below:

“12.350. The site is currently occupied by Woodbridge Town Football Club however it is acknowledged that a new location for the football club will need to be identified during the Local Plan period. The allocation of this site is intended to provide a degree of certainty to the football club and the community in identifying options for relocation of the site. Critical to the policy is that the development of the site would only be supported as part of a comprehensive scheme within which the football club is facilitated in relocating to a suitable location within the town, which is accessible to the community by non-car modes of transport.”

4. Hearings sessions related to the policy took place on Thursday 5th September 2019. During the hearing sessions the Inspector invited East Suffolk Council, Hopkins Homes and Woodbridge Town Football Club to finalise a Statement of Common Ground, setting out proposed modifications to the policy to incorporate criteria related to the relocation of the football club. A Statement of Common Ground between East Suffolk Council and Hopkins Homes was submitted in November 2019. An accompanying note, also dated November 2019, sets out the position of Woodbridge Town Football Club (Document J28).

5. The Council has considered the guidance produced by Sport England, ‘Playing Fields Policy and Guidance’ (March 2018). This document sets out guidance in relation to the consideration of matters associated with the replacement of playing fields, and the Council proposes modifications to further reflect this.

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6. Modifications are shown in strikethrough for deleted text and in underline for additional text. The proposed further modifications are shown in grey shading. The Council will include these revisions in the schedule of modifications that has been collated as part of the Examination.

Modifications to paragraph 12.350:

“The site is currently occupied by Woodbridge Town Football Club however it is acknowledged that a new location for the football club will need to be identified during the Local Plan period. The allocation of this site is intended to provide a degree of certainty to the football club and the community in identifying options for relocation of the site. Critical to the policy is that the development of the site would only be supported as part of a comprehensive scheme within which the football club is facilitated in relocating to a suitable location in compliance with the criteria set out in the policy. The policy criteria include a requirement for equivalent or better management and accessibility arrangements to be provided, which aims to ensure that users can continue to access the new facility and relates to matters such as any community use agreements within the town, which is accessible by non-car modes of transport.”

Modifications Policy SCLP12:33:

“4.16ha of land at Woodbridge Town Football Club is allocated for housing for approximately 120 dwellings associated with the relocation of the football club. Development will only be supported as part of a proposal which would establish suitable replacement facilities for the football club which provide equivalent or better provision of football club facilities within a location which is accessible to the community by non-car modes of transport.

Development on the site allocated under this policy will be expected to comply with the following criteria:

a) Provision of a mix of housing including housing suitable to meet the needs of the elderly population and including affordable housing;

b) Design, layout and height of buildings appropriate to the site’s location adjacent to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;

c) Retention and strengthening of the existing landscaping and trees on the perimeter of the site;

d) Provision of open space providing opportunities for all ages;

e) An archaeological assessment will be required;

f) A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required;

g) A project level Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required;

h) Provision of a robust package of sustainable transport measures which promote connectivity with the town; and

i) Access to be provided via Fynn Road.

Proposals for the relocation of the football club will be expected to comply with the following criteria:

j) Demonstration of how the football club will be replaced in a way which provides equivalent or better provision in quantitative and qualitative terms;

k) The replacement facility must be fully brought into use in advance of the loss of the existing facility to ensure continuity of provision unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated and an
appropriate alternative timescale securing the delivery of the replacement provision is proposed and agreed with the Council;

l) An appropriate highways access should be provided;

m) The site must be in a suitable location to meet the needs of users of the site and be accessible to the community by non-car modes of transport;

n) There should be no unacceptable impact on the amenity of any adjoining residential uses in terms of noise and light pollution; and

o) An appropriate landscape mitigation scheme should be provided if necessary; and

p) The new facility should be operated to equivalent or better accessibility and management arrangements.”