

Local Plan 2021 - Little Melton PC Response

Question 1

LMPC broadly agrees with the Objectives but does not agree that the current process has met the aims described in Objective 1 to provide opportunities for self-builds. LMPC was expecting the VCHAP process to provide an opportunity for local people to comment on possible changes to the settlement boundary. Several recent PAs have been refused as being outside the Settlement Boundary (one PA was also inside the Landscape Protection zone), people are now confused that there is a Preferred Site that is not even adjacent to the Settlement Boundary and is inside the Landscape Protection zone - this undermines faith in the planning system.

Question 2

LMPC agrees with the policy on Standard Requirements and notes the policies for -

- Minimising impact on amenity of existing residents
- landscaping consistent with a rural, edge of village location

Question 3

LMPC agrees that there should be a policy for design and that developments on the edge of villages should be appropriate for the locality. Three of the recent developments have not made adequate provision for parking and this has led to cars being parked on nearby roads and pavements.. There is poor public transport in LM and most houses have at least two cars.

Question 4

Particular attention should be given to providing accommodation that is attractive to older people wishing to downsize. There should be communal facilities such as visitor accommodation and flexible support arrangements. There are many large houses that are occupied by single elderly residents, these houses would become available for families if better alternatives were provided for the elderly.

Response to questions 82, 83 and 84

Objections to further development in Little Melton

The currently adopted [local plan](#) states -

Policy 15 of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) identifies Little Melton as a Service Village in which land will be allocated for small-scale housing growth in the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2026, within the range of 10-20 dwellings, subject to form, character and servicing constraints.

In fact, 79 houses have been built in LM since this was written and a further 30 will soon start construction, 88 of these houses were approved because there was not a five year housing supply for the Greater Norwich area.

Little Melton has a small land area and **can't be considered in isolation** - the new developments at Hethersett are only 600m from the houses in LM. Traffic levels have already increased noticeably and will increase further once development starts on LM Road. Once the current development on School Lane is complete the number of houses in LM will have increased by over 30% since the last Local Plan and over 1200 houses are in the process of construction within less than a mile from the centre of LM. There is a current PA for an additional 200 houses at Hethersett which will further contribute to traffic through LM. There are many complaints to the PC about traffic through the village and the PC has been pressing Highways for many years to approve a traffic calming plan that the PC will pay for. There are also daily complaints about lorries bound for the Business Park on LM road, passing through the village in contravention of the weight restriction zone.

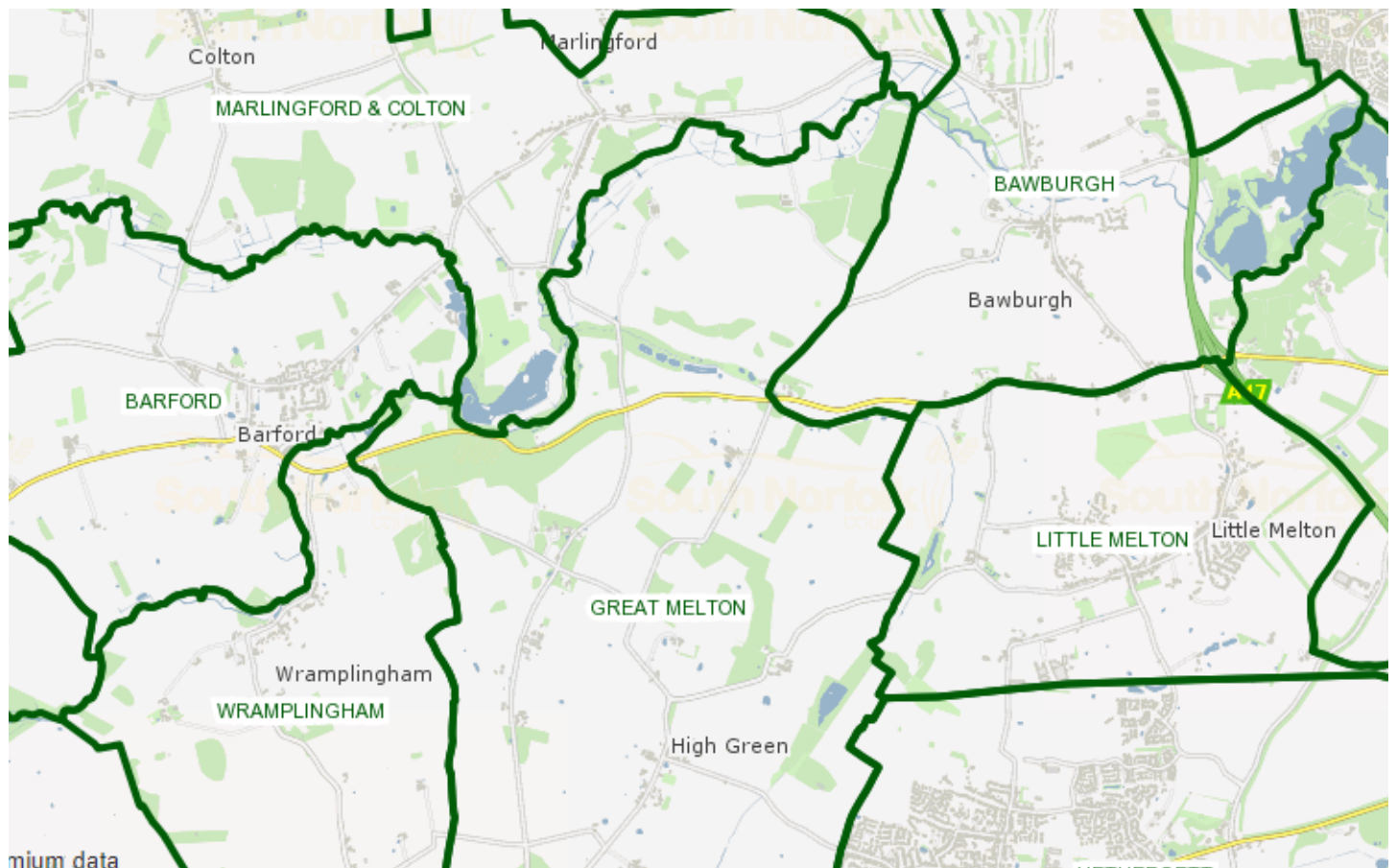
Parishioners have been complaining for five years about the difficulty of getting access to doctors and dentists and this problem is no closer to being solved. The Hethersett surgery is already oversubscribed and recently was only accepting emergency appointments for a period of several weeks.

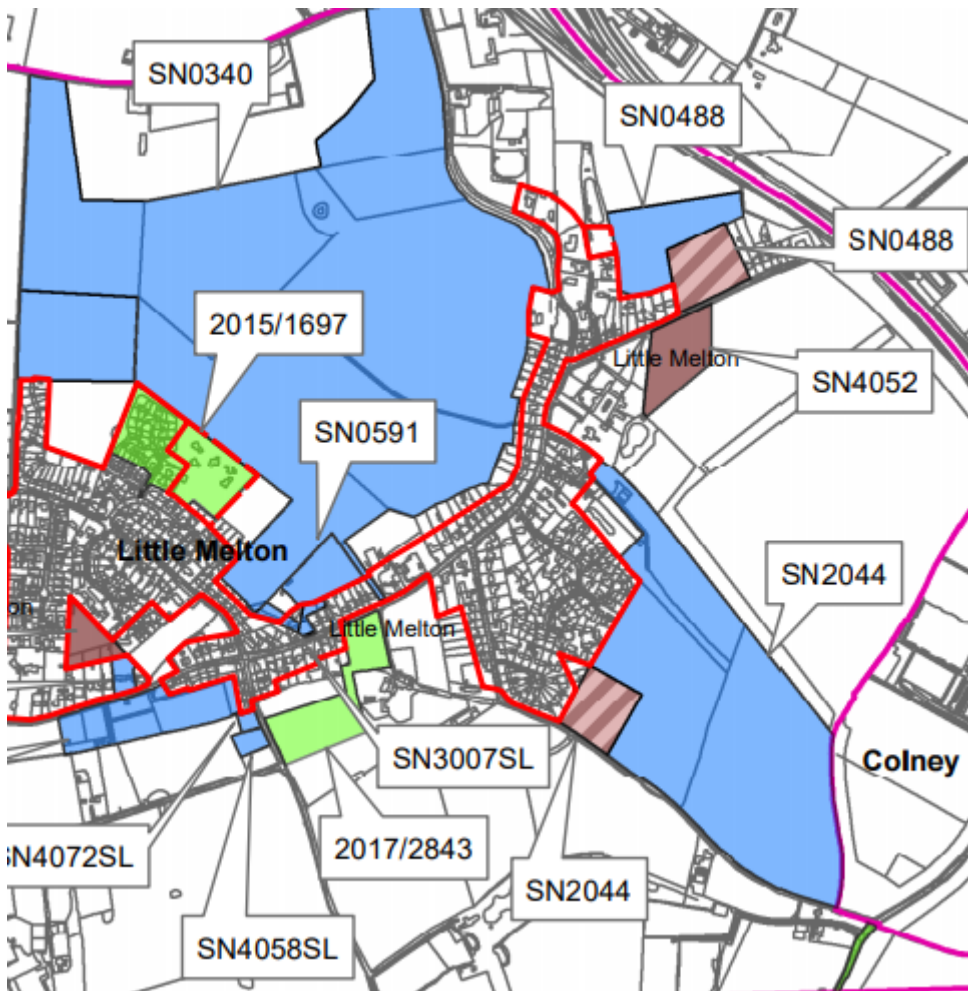
LM is classified as a service village on the basis that it has a shop. However the shop has been up for sale for many years and no buyer has come forward. The Parish Council supports the shop and recently explored the possibility of acquiring it as a community shop. This did not proceed, mainly due to the very limited parking space available and the shop's dependency on the adjoining house for facilities. There is no scope for expansion. It seems unlikely that the shop will continue once the current owners retire.

Summary

The PC does not think that there should be any further estate development in LM and that none of the proposed/shortlisted sites are suitable for estates of 25 houses. Such development would be contrary to [SNVC Objective 3 - Protect the character of villages and their settings](#).

Limited development that is sympathetic to the surroundings, would be acceptable if spread between sites SN0488 and SN2044.





Comments on the preferred and short listed sites

Preferred site SN4052 and shortlisted site SN0488 on School Lane

These sites lie well within the Landscape Protection Zone. LMPC has always opposed development within this zone and does not wish to see a precedent that would lead to development within the much bigger site SN0340. The NRP has land designated for expansion that is only 500m from these sites. Great importance was attached to preserving the much bigger gap between Hethersett and Cringleford - the same principle should apply here.

SN4052 is not adjacent to the existing settlement boundary - Manor Farm barns were converted from redundant agricultural buildings and permitted development rights were withdrawn. If SN4052 is permitted then it will be difficult to argue against development of the extensive land attached to the barns and adjacent properties.

The sites are suggested as being suitable for 25 houses/ Hectare, this is a much higher density than the existing houses (about 10/ Hectare) and double the density of the recent development at All Saints Close. There is some logic in permitting development along the north side of School Lane with houses at a similar density to the existing but a high density estate on the either side would be completely out of character with the surroundings.

The recent developments in LM are all within walking distance of the main facilities, the proposed developments would be 1.6km from the Village Hall and playing field and a lot of car traffic will be generated. Whilst it may be possible to provide a footpath on the dead end section of School Lane, the path on the lower

section of the main road is very narrow. The road is also narrow at that point and traffic comes very close to the kerb - people do not feel safe to walk there and it is likely that most parents would drive their children to school.

Poor visibility at the junction with Green Lane has been identified as a factor that affects SN0488 - the same problems apply to SN4052! The junction is at a sharp angle and traffic coming from Green Lane is mostly over the centre of the road when entering the dead end section of School Lane. When leaving the T junction there is very limited visibility to the right (north) and drivers have to pull onto the main road to see round the fence on the corner. Visibility to the left is also poor and traffic is frequently speeding down the hill. There is already extensive traffic from the recently extended office block at the end of School Lane - especially at rush hours.

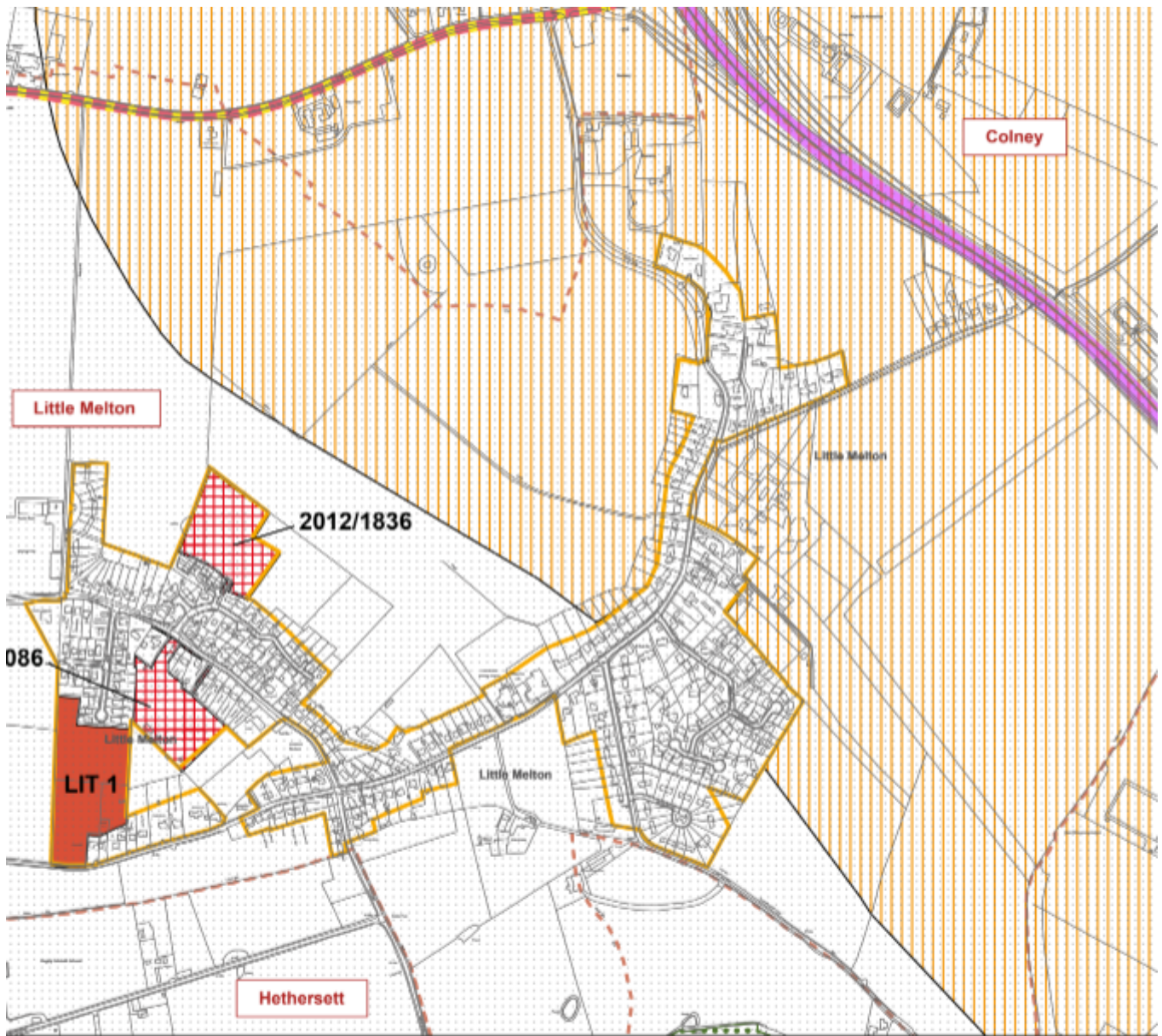
LM has very few public footpaths - many of the paths currently used are not public rights of way. The dead end section of School Lane is used daily by dog walkers (there is a well used dog bin there), for exercise and by children on bikes and scooters. It has been an important recreational facility during Covid and outside the rush hours the road is safe for walkers with dogs on long leads, this will all be lost if the road is urbanized.




Rainwater from as far as way as All Saints Close reaches the the road via pipes and ditches. A lot of it just runs down the road and the bottom of the road becomes a lake. Some of the water is discharged from nearby fields and from Green Lane. Last winter, the gardens at 107 and 109 were flooded for several weeks as a result of problems with the ditches and pipes - Highways are aware of the problems but there is no simple resolution, due to the relative heights of the pipes.

When the wind blows strongly from the east the noise from the A47 is loud enough to make outside conversations difficult on that section of School Lane and windows have to be kept closed at night. There is also significant pollution from the road.

Current residents accept these inconveniences in return for not having much traffic on the lane but new houses should not be built so close to the road - SN4052 is on rising ground and will suffer from even worse noise and air pollution. Parts of these sites would be less than 200m from the A47, well within the pollution zone.



 Parish Boundary

 County Wildlife Sites

 Corridors of Movement

Scale at A3:
1:7,000

 Southern Bypass Protection Zone

 Undeveloped Approaches

Shortlisted site SN2044 on Braymeadow

This site is adjacent to existing development at a density of about 17 houses to the Hectare, 25 houses on this site would be too high a density and not in keeping with the existing houses.

The road to the east is narrow and has no footpath. If development is permitted here then there should be a cycle path connection to the path alongside Hethersett Lane, this would provide a much needed safe route for children cycling to school and for people cycling to work at the NRP, Hospital etc.

It should be noted that when there are roadworks on Hethersett Lane that Braymeadow becomes an alternate route - even for buses!