



OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF LAND AND BUILDINGS AT BELLE VUE SUDBURY

This objection is lodged under Section 123(1),(2A) of the local government act 1972.

The area of land included in this proposal raises several concerns to the Sudbury Society. We are not opposed to the sale of the property in principle but strongly opposed to the method and timing the Council has chosen to adopt

1. **EXTENT OF THE SITE.** The extent of the site in relation to the existing Belle Vue House means that the possibility of retaining the house for an alternative use is almost impossible because of the disposal boundaries that have been drawn. The proposed area to be sold will sterilise the southern area of the park alongside Cornard Road including the proposed site of the new café and facilities. They will require vehicular access for deliveries etc from Cornard Road, which we believe will be impractical and unsafe.
2. **RETENTION OF THE HOUSE.** We would prefer to see the original section of Belle Vue House retained. It is a locally listed heritage asset and every effort should be made to restore it. Just to the north of this site at St Leonards Hospital is a perfect exemplar of this type of refurbishment which has recently won a Sudbury Society Architectural award. The scheme for the Hospital development was negotiated by the Health Authority with Babergh Council as the belief was that a demolition of the whole site would be rejected. The buildings that were retained on that site had just the same level of protection as exist at Belle Vue House. Likewise the Walnut Tree Hospital site is another glowing example of what enhancement/ refurbishment rather than demolition can bring to Sudbury's town centre, suffering as it is from serious decline in the retail and hospitality sectors.

We accept that it may sometimes be more expensive but it is always a greener solution to retain and convert an existing building rather than demolish and construct a new one. However the present disposal plans make no mention of the need to encourage retention and will in effect rule this out from any developer's bid.

3. **TIMING.** The site has been a burden on the Council for many years. We do not understand the need for such a curtailed consultation period as stated in the sale notice. As the Council has to take preliminary steps to ensure it has full rights to sell the site, the advertised closing date for bids of 22 January 2021 is unrealistic. It will only encourage bidders to submit the most financially advantageous proposal, namely wholesale demolition, without giving time for alternative schemes involving retention to be devised.