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**Media release**

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**Secretary of State promises to take healthcare comments on board**

**Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting has promised to take on board Saddleworth Parish Council’s comments that healthcare provision needs to be a much more important part of the planning process during its ongoing dialogue with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).**

The Parish Council wrote to the Department for Health and Social Care and the MHCLG following the public consultation on its forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan, where local residents repeatedly raised the failure of the planning system to deliver healthcare facilities needed.

The letter said: “The Government shares your concern about the impact of planning legislation on healthcare provision.

“The Department welcomes your recommendations. However, changes to the planning system are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for the MHCLG and not within the remit of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The Department will consider your recommendations as part of its ongoing dialogue with MHCLG.”

The forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan for Saddleworth Parish now includes a section on Healthcare, Social Care and Education, in direct response to requests from the public to address the provision of these facilities.

Councillor Beeley added: “The Parish Council does not have any legal powers to force the building of healthcare facilities, for example. However, we recognised the strength of feeling from people for this to be considered more in planning terms, so we have added what policies we could to push for healthcare, education and social care to be more of a factor in planning decisions.

“This is also why we have been in dialogue with both the MHCLG and the Department for Health and Social Care, pushing for them to change the law and ensure that people can access the healthcare they need in the places they need them – closer to home.”

**ENDS …**