

6. SCENARIO 3: GOING FOR GROWTH

6.01 The 'going for growth' approach assumes:

- promotion of Felixstowe as a sub-regional growth point, taking around 80% of the additional development allocated to Suffolk Coastal District as part of the Haven Gateway, providing an alternative location within SCDC to the Ipswich fringe;
- The draft East of England Plan (December 2004) suggests that the part of Suffolk Coastal District that falls within the Haven Gateway should provide a net increase in dwellings of 7,050 over the period 2001-2021. After deducting identified brownfield and windfall sites from this figure, SCDC will seek locations for 1500 dwellings in Felixstowe;
- higher levels of development provide an important driver of regeneration through renewal of the residential community, town centre and the range of facilities and services in the town. This requires growth that provides for housing for employees of the Port and diversified employment development;
- an upgraded rail link that contributes towards additional transport capacity;
- improvements to road links obtained through related development;
- all Port related employment land allocations taken up (as in other scenarios);
- a new employment land allocation is made at Walton that are not geographically related to the Port to diversify business and employment opportunities, helping to prevent non-port related users being squeezed out by stronger demand from port-related users.
- the bulk of the new development will be concentrated in a single location in order to maximise the benefits that accrue from comprehensive development – new schools; health, welfare and

sports facilities; infrastructure investments, including public open space.

- development at this level will cause any consolidation of schools, particularly secondary schools, to be reviewed. It will deliver sufficient children of school age into local schools to make closure of a secondary school difficult to justify.
- this scenario will provide capacity for additional convenience and comparison retailing helping to revitalise the town centre but only if new development is well related to it.

COMPONENTS

6.02 The 'going for growth' scenario comprises:

- In the region of **approximately 1400 homes (circa 3000 people)** over the period 2001 to 2021 including in the region of 400 affordable homes, an additional gross development area of some 40 to 50 ha.
- A key component is a new Enterprise Park of around 3 hectares located away from the Port and restricted to non-port-related uses. Approximate capacity to provide between 600 and 900 jobs. The importance to diversify Felixstowe's economy means that this could be sought as part of any of the scenarios but housing should be developed to meet the number of jobs created.
- The development of allocated employment land at Blofield and the Haven Exchange site.
- New town centre convenience and comparison retail provision and improvements. The reconfiguration of the Solar Store on Hamilton Road, as described in the Moderate Scenario, would form a key element. Drawing number EED001-11: 'Foodstore Reconfiguration' illustrates a possible approach to masterplanning the area.
- In addition, town centre retail offer upgraded through initiatives to foster local businesses and independent retailers, and diversification and improvements of the leisure and entertainment offer.

- Retention and improvement of both secondary schools sites.
- More substantial additional funds for infrastructure and amenity investment;
- A strategy for the improvement of Felixstowe's public realm has been identified. This is explored in greater detail in Appendix C. This is a vital facet in raising Felixstowe's image and reinvigorating the tourism sector. This scenario is likely to fund and enable the greatest changes to the public realm;
- Improvements to Bent Hill underpinning regeneration of the east end of the High Street;
- Tourism initiatives that go for quality and for speciality short breaks – regional level conferences, nature breaks (wildlife, etc), art, golf, etc.

IMPLICATIONS

6.03 The implications of this scenario are:

- Provision of a 3 hectare business/Enterprise park restricted to non-port-related uses may help to broaden the economic base.
- Continued popularity as a retirement destination continues to exert an upward pressure on house prices as demand outstrips supply. This is moderated by the development of new affordable housing, particularly for key workers. The Peninsula will continue to be sustainable through the availability of affordable housing to key workers.
- Additional investment in road and rail infrastructure from large scale development, to support port related investment.
- Secondary education continues in two schools or a single school split over two campuses with a common sixth form on one. This will retain maximum flexibility in terms of future expansion.
- Tourism improves. Concentration of available resources on key projects together with high quality on the South Seafront site and regeneration of the gardens and links to the town centre increases the numbers of short stay and day visitors. (Please refer to Appendix C).

- The focus of new development and growth in the Haven Gateway will still be in Ipswich but the Felixstowe Peninsula will offer an alternative growth pole within the sub region.
- Increased population will support new retail provision helping to reinforce the town centre's role and reduce leakage of expenditure, attracting investment and new businesses.
- Existing levels of deprivation should improve as employment opportunities diversify and the stock of affordable housing is enhanced.

BENEFITS

6.04 The potential benefits of the "Going for Growth" scenario are:

- A strengthening of the population, population mix and housing stock
- Diversification of the economic base.
- Potential reduction in in-commuting
- No worsening of the capacity of the ability of the transport links to or within the town, due to improvements to infrastructure partially funded by development.
- New school investment to create a new primary school (required by this scale of development) and to improve existing secondary schools.
- A stronger and more viable town centre with an improved retail offer.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.05 This scenario comprises development in the region of 1400 homes over the period 2001 to 2021. This level of growth will have a significant impact in rectifying the existing negative issues and processes at work in the town and peninsula.
- 6.06 Development focuses upon the brownfield sites but requires expansion on greenfield locations. The sites can be summarised as follows:
- 6.07 This scenario retains the focus of development on South Felixstowe and proposes additional development that reinforces Walton as a distinct community with enhanced facilities. The development of land at Walton would strengthen this western element of the town. It would benefit from the existing infrastructure in this location and reinforce the local area facilities and amenities through an increased population.
- 6.08 This scenario includes a 3 hectare Enterprise Park as part of development in Walton. This could be a better location for the Learning and Enterprise Centre than the currently proposed Blofield Park. The centre would act as a stimulus for the Enterprise Park and should be dissociated from port activities that are likely to prefer the Blofield site location. The Enterprise Park would expand and diversify the Felixstowe economy. Diversification of the town's economy is an extremely important aspect, one that could be sought as part of any of the scenarios but likely to be supported by the higher development scenarios.
- 6.09 Part of the land identified for development is currently designated as Protection of Open Character within policy AP171 which seeks to protect the open character of the land that separates Felixstowe from Trimley St Mary.
- 6.10 Initial proposals for access arrangements relating to the Walton land are explored in Appendix G.
- 6.11 A summary of the location for development proposed in scenario three, 'Going for Growth' is listed in the following table;

SCENARIO 3			
Site Name	Site type	Gross site area (hectares)	Quantity of net residential units at density levels of 30-50 dph
North of Walton High Street, adjacent to A14 link	Green separation	12.83	327-494
South of Walton High Street, adjacent to A14	Green separation	5.89	150-227
Land between Trimley St Mary & A14 link road (Port of Felixstowe Road)	Green separation	4.72	120-182
<i>Enterprise Park – employment</i>	<i>Green separation</i>	<i>3 hectares</i>	<i>Employment</i>
Convalescent Hill	Brownfield	0.51	13-20
Ordnance Roundabout	Brownfield	2.05	52-79
Peewit and Felixstowe Beach Caravan Parks	Brownfield	12.53	320-482
South Seafront	Brownfield	7.08	158
Land at Beach Station Road	Brownfield	1.47	50
The Convent, Orwell Road	Brownfield	1.19	60
Land north of Recreation Lane	Brownfield	0.42	19
Land at Old Hall Farm, High Road East	Brownfield	0.75	24
Scenario 3 TOTAL		49.45	1293-1795

6.12 The location of development for the 'going for growth' scenario is illustrated on master scenarios plan EED001/07 and in detail on plan EED001 / 09.

An Alternative Approach: Additional regeneration in South Felixstowe and employment diversification

- 6.13 One additional site could be considered for development in the more progressive scenarios – the Haven Exchange site in South Felixstowe.

Haven Exchange

- 6.14 The Haven Exchange site is a valuable site located in a prime position in South Felixstowe, benefiting from proximity to the seafront, good transport links (Port of Felixstowe Road – A14), and excellent site conditions – flat, enclosed, well proportioned and a good size of approximately 4ha. (More detail can be found in the site analysis report, Appendix B.)
- 6.15 Haven Exchange is designated as an employment site in the current Local Plan. It is questionable whether this current land use designation is allowing this valuable site to realise its worth. Whilst designation of employment land is essential, especially in line with housing growth, the location of employment land is an important consideration.
- 6.16 Current planning policy and permission for the site allocates the site for B1 and B8 uses (no B2 – general industrial). Also, importantly, there are noise restrictions overnight and condition 14 to the original planning consent (1994 – which still applies) states that *“no part of the site shall be used for the outside storage of goods, materials or other equipment (including containers) without the prior permission of the Local Planning Authority.”* Hence, port related storage/haulage/container uses are not possible, which restricts significantly the potential demand from occupiers.
- 6.17 Policies such as these have been put in place in an attempt to stimulate a degree of employment diversification – by restricting port-related activities such as storage. Whilst employment diversification is a strategic aim, essential for the long term future of the economic prosperity of the Felixstowe Peninsula, a key consideration to enable diversification is to provide the most suitable locations for new businesses.
- 6.18 Take up of plots for employment uses on the Haven Exchange site has been slow. A prime reason for the slow take up is the location of the site. Given the proximity of the site to the Port of Felixstowe, the majority of employment interest in the Haven

Exchange comes from port-related activity, uses which are ineligible to use the site due to the aforementioned policies. Non-port related businesses seem to have been generally discouraged from the Haven Exchange site primarily due to its immediate proximity to the port, which they do not need or want to be associated with.

- 6.19 The need for employment diversification has been addressed in scenarios 3 and 4 which propose the development of a new Enterprise Park, located off the Dock Spur Roundabout, physically remote from the Port in a superior location for non-port employment development and therefore improves the prospects of diversifying the local economy.
- 6.20 With the identification of this alternative employment site, and the potential development of an Enterprise Park, the need to retain an under-performing employment site such as the Haven Exchange is lessened.
- 6.21 Cumulatively these factors lead to the need to reconsider the current use designation. It could be changed, retaining an element of business / industrial on the site frontage, where a small number of businesses have recently located, whilst the remainder of the site is developed for residential use. This would provide a very valuable site for housing, which would integrate with the South Felixstowe regeneration agenda outlined in scenario 2.
- 6.22 The residential element would be closely integrated with the potential residential development outlined for the neighbouring caravan park site, and together with the other sites identified in scenario 2 would provide a comprehensive regeneration proposal to uplift the South of Felixstowe.
- 6.23 The combination of an element of employment activity at the Haven Exchange and the Enterprise Park by Dock Spur roundabout would help to deliver an appropriate balance between new housing development and employment opportunities.