

# **PART TWO**

## **THE CORE STRATEGY & OPTIONS**



# THE CORE STRATEGY & OPTIONS

## THE VISION

**Building upon the best of the present, the Suffolk Coastal district in 2021 will be one where people want to live and invest, and care for others and the environment.**



**Suffolk Coastal**

*...where quality of life counts*

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## 2.1 THE COUNCIL'S VISION

- 2.1.1 **The Council's Vision for the district** is centred in its motto: '*Where Quality of Life Counts*'. The achievement of this is based around the achievement of a balance. This will take advantage of economic opportunities and address the social challenges of the diverse rural area while at the same time protecting and enhancing the environmental heritage, the countryside, traditional villages, historic market towns and urban communities all of which provide the district with its unique character.
- 2.1.2 By 2021 much of the high level of housing needed to address the problems of declining household size (with the resultant need for up to 10% more housing units just to accommodate the existing population), and continued inward migration arising from both increased employment and the area's attraction as a retirement location, and meeting the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy, will have taken place in the south around the regional centre of Ipswich and major employment centre of Felixstowe. Adjacent to Ipswich, housing will be provided in support of its role as the county town. Martlesham Heath, including BT's Martlesham Heath research and development headquarters, will have developed further as a key part of the ICT (Information, Communication, Technology) cluster for the East of England. At Felixstowe new housing will be provided for some of the many workers who are currently forced to commute into the town to work each day, and for local residents (particularly the young) who wish to remain in the locality, and in order to support local services. The regeneration of the resort and diversity of new employment will have enhanced Felixstowe, consolidating the Port of Felixstowe status as the pre-eminent container port in the country. The Haven Gateway, including Felixstowe, will be a key transport gateway for the country.
- 2.1.3 Elsewhere, the five market towns of Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Leiston, Saxmundham and Woodbridge will have retained their vitality and had their prosperity enhanced by appropriate levels of commercial and residential development. They will be the focus for local services and jobs for the surrounding rural areas.
- 2.1.4 As part of a sustainable pattern of living, the development that has taken place in some villages will have been limited and restricted to meeting local needs, with more focused on those communities that provide a range of services. Nevertheless, all rural communities will be vibrant and healthy, linked to services. The rural economy will be diverse, with an improved tourism package that is built on the character of the area.
- 2.1.5 The prospects of an ageing population, so evident at the start of the millennium, will have reduced. The age profile will be more evenly distributed with the 18 to 30s better represented than ever before. Local people, particularly young first time buyers, will not be forced out of the area because of competition from those who can afford to pay more for housing. Young people who have left the area in order to pursue Further Education will have incentives to return, namely skilled jobs, a good spread of housing across the areas of need, homes that they can afford and an exceptional environment. Emphasis will be given to partnership working with the relevant agencies to address the issues of the elderly in the more remote rural areas, providing them with the opportunity to remain close to or within their existing communities and social support systems.
- 2.1.6 Deprivation will no longer be an issue, as support will have been given to addressing the needs of the previously relatively deprived areas of Saxmundham and Leiston as well as the southern parts of Felixstowe.
- 2.1.7 All new development will have been supported by the appropriate infrastructure and provide a safe environment with little fear of crime. Whenever new housing development has taken place, a high priority will have been given to the provision of housing that is affordable and constructed to a high standard of design and is tailored to meet the needs of local people. Emphasis will have been given to ensuring the integration of the new within the established communities, with associated new facilities being provided for the benefit of both.

- 2.1.8 Use of motor vehicles will remain important particularly within the rural areas, but increased opportunities will have been provided for cycling and walking within and around the main settlements. Innovative ways will have been found to secure and encourage public and community transport provision to serve both residents and visitors. Where opportunities to improve the main strategic road network and key local routes have arisen, they will have been taken where this can be achieved without any overriding environmental objection.
- 2.1.9 The distinctive and valued natural and historic landscape, and the built environment, will continue to be protected, but will have been enhanced over the preceding period. Large parts of the landscape of the district will remain of national importance and be designated as such, being a key asset for local people and visitors. It will be managed in order to retain its character. For the coast and estuaries long-term plans will be in place that recognise climate change but respect the social, economic and environmental character of coastal areas and communities. In the towns and suburban areas, the quality of the urban townscape will have been preserved or improved, including by the protection or creation of green open spaces.
- 2.1.10 Centres of excellence in education and the arts, added to a wide range of leisure pursuits, complete a distinct district.
- 2.1.11 In summary, building upon the best of the present, the Suffolk Coastal district in 2021 will be one where people want to live and invest, and care for others and the environment.
- 2.1.12 There are five basic themes to this Vision and these will form the structure of the Core Strategy. These are:

1	<b>The Spatial Framework:</b> Achieving a Better Quality of Life	To ensure that development supports the principles of sustainable development and secures sustainable communities
2	<b>Housing:</b> Meeting Housing Needs	To encourage the improved provision of, and access to, appropriate housing to meet existing and future needs.
3	<b>The Economy:</b> Strengthening the Economy	To stimulate a prosperous economy in order to improve the quality of life for the community.
4	<b>Built and Natural Environment:</b> Protecting and enhancing the environment	To protect, improve and use our environment in a way that not only benefits the people who live, work and visit the area, but also leaves a rich and diverse legacy for future generations.
5	<b>Community Well-Being:</b> Developing a safe and healthy community	To protect and promote the well-being of the community in terms of its education, health, safety, leisure and cultural opportunities, and access to leisure opportunities.

- 2.1.13 Cutting across these themes is that of transport, where the Council will work with the highway authorities to create a sustainable and integrated transport system.
- 2.1.14 In order to implement and deliver the Vision a set of Core Objectives has been devised. These stem from the issues that have been identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Community Strategy and during the continuous public engagement that has preceded the publication of this document. The Core Objectives are set out in each of the themed chapters.

## TOWN PROFILES AND VISIONS

- 2.1.15 In addition to the Vision of the district as a whole, each town has been assessed on the basis of their individual character and qualities. A separate Vision has been created for each town and this is put forward for comment.
- 2.1.16 For each town a Vision is preceded by a profile of the town.

## Aldeburgh

- 2.1.17 Aldeburgh is a small coastal town with a population of about 2,800 located entirely within the Heritage Coast and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Its setting, therefore, is of an extremely high natural quality.
- 2.1.18 As a result Aldeburgh is well known as a place to visit, particularly because of its environment and its musical connections. This can cause traffic and car parking problems.
- 2.1.19 The town itself is also highly attractive. The medieval street pattern is closely-knit and buildings are generally small, with varying roof pitches, and constructed from a wide range of materials. The older part of the town, located close to the sea, is designated as a Conservation Area.
- 2.1.20 Within the older part there are sites, gaps or areas that are desirable to retain in an undeveloped form. This would also apply to the area to the immediate west of the old town. Built in the mid-19th century, largely as a result of the efforts of the Garrett family, this now presents a unique character, much of which is created by large houses and buildings and the spaces they occupy.
- 2.1.21 The coastal location and high environmental quality makes Aldeburgh a popular place in which to live, particularly to retire to. The population structure is, as a consequence, unusual with a high proportion of the elderly. In addition, a high proportion – 27% - of the housing stock is used as second homes.
- 2.1.22 The town is beginning to develop into two distinct physical areas – the older part close to the sea (which accommodates the High Street and the tourist attractions) and the newer part (which accommodates a larger proportion of the population) on the western and north-western approaches.
- 2.1.23 With the exception of a small supermarket at the entrance to the town, the main shopping provision in Aldeburgh is located entirely on the High Street. This town centre is strongly dominated by specialist shops with an emphasis on the tourism market.
- 2.1.24 An analysis of the town centre is as follows: (Source 2003 Retail Study)

### The “Health Check”

- Strong representation of A3 and non-retail uses
- Few national multiples, but specialist retailers
- Very low vacancy rate (4%)
- Very good environmental quality

### Quantitative assessment

- Very small capacity to increase comparison floorspace
- No development opportunities
- A recent foodstore outside of the town centre could recapture lost trade

### Overall

- An unspoilt and attractive centre, and is performing well

- 2.1.23 The **Vision for Aldeburgh** in 2021 is a small town that:
- a) Retains and protects its close-knit historic character without suffering the effects of “town cramming”;
  - b) Retains its retail and service offer, serving both “old” and “new” town residents alike, its hinterland and visitor populations;
  - c) Has sufficient services and facilities, particularly health and education, to serve the population profile;

- d) Has the benefit of some affordable housing, created in order to address the age imbalance of the population and enabling local residents to remain within the area;
- e) Retains the sensitive setting and edges of the town;
- f) Has the benefit of traffic management measures in the High Street and elsewhere providing an improved physical environment within the central areas, and restricting potential damage to the sea defences to the south of the town
- g) Retains its role as a tourist centre, offering a range of accommodation and visitor attractions.
- h) Is protected from the risk of flooding to an appropriate level.

### **Felixstowe/Trimley St Martin/Trimley St Mary (Felixstowe Peninsula South)**

- 2.1.24. **Felixstowe Peninsula South** consists of Felixstowe and the two adjoining communities of Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary. It is largely dominated by the Town, Port and Resort of Felixstowe in terms of employment, shopping, housing, traffic generation and even in visual terms - the cranes on the Dock are visible for some distance. Being a peninsula, the areas available for expansion are necessarily constrained by the coast and estuary, parts of which are designated as national and international importance for their nature conservation interest, and by the high quality of the landscape to the north of the town which is designated an AONB.
- 2.1.25. The Peninsula is linked to Ipswich and the remainder of the country by rail (passenger and freight) and the A14 (T), a vital road artery within the district and the wider Haven Gateway sub-region. A lack of alternative routes, however, coupled with high levels of commuting in and out of Felixstowe mean the A14 is becoming increasingly congested. Major traffic congestion occurs every time an incident blocks the A14, particularly east of and including the Orwell Bridge as no suitable alternative routes exist. The railway link is an asset but patronage is low, despite increasing congestion on the A14. Continued passenger services are increasingly under pressure to create capacity for more freight on the railway
- 2.1.26. Felixstowe, the largest of the six towns within the district, developed as a fashionable spa town at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The town contains an interesting mix of Victorian and Edwardian architecture and modern buildings providing a mix of shops, restaurants, galleries and historic interest. The seafront provides traditional arcades and funfair plus the award winning seafront gardens and shingle beaches. These uses are 'stretched' along the seafront, which has created issues of access and use, particularly in out of season months. Felixstowe also benefits from a range of facilities and amenities within the leisure sphere that serve both residents and visitors, to varying degrees.
- 2.1.27. In terms of its resident population, the town has more people of retirement age and fewer people of working age than the norm, either in the rest of Suffolk or across the UK, though broadly comparable with other seaside towns. This profile could become critical to the vitality and viability of the town and the service it provides to other settlements in its hinterland, if these trends continue. Younger generations already have to look outside Felixstowe for careers and housing. Felixstowe lacks opportunities for Further and Higher Education, obliging young people to look to Ipswich and beyond to continue their education.
- 2.1.28. As with other English coastal resorts, Felixstowe has suffered a decline in its tourist trade over recent years. Serviced accommodation has been lost, but the resort remains an attraction to day-trippers in particular. Nonetheless, it continues to play a very important role as a shopping, service (including education and healthcare provision) and employment centre for the other settlements within the peninsula.

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- 2.1.29. At the same time the town has suffered a decline in terms of its tourism offer, the Port has continued to expand and is now the largest container Port in the UK and the 5th largest in Europe.
- The Port now employs over 2,700 people.
  - A further 9,850 work in Port related businesses.
  - This is 45% of the total workforce in the Felixstowe area.
  - The Port has plans to employ a further 200.
  - It is estimated that the South Reconfiguration scheme would create a further 620 direct jobs in Felixstowe and 860 in indirect and induced jobs across the Haven Gateway.
- 2.1.30 Not surprisingly, the Port is recognised as a strategic employment site of regional and national importance.
- 2.1.31 Whilst the Port dominates the town's economy and use of land, creeping ever closer to the town itself, it does not connect with the wider town physically, socially or economically as strongly as it could.
- 2.1.32 The population of Felixstowe is increasing slowly although household size is falling. Despite slow population growth, there are therefore even more people looking for homes, and Felixstowe has more and more smaller households - single people or couples particularly those that are key workers or first time buyers. The number and type of new homes provided in the town has not matched this increase in demand for homes. The David Lock report identified the need for c. 1700 new homes over the period to 2026 simply to continue to accommodate the existing Felixstowe Peninsula population, due to the ongoing reduction in average household size from 2.35 in 2003 to 2.1 by 2026.
- 2.1.33 The growth of jobs in Felixstowe, driven by expansion of the Port, means that employment is now out of balance with the availability of housing. As a result, more of the new jobs are being taken up by people who are not able to find a home in Felixstowe, even if they would like one. The 2001 Census revealed that there was a daily net inflow to Felixstowe of 2,719 workers. This comprised an outflow of 3,600 Felixstowe residents to jobs in Ipswich and elsewhere and an inflow of 6,319 non-residents who work in Felixstowe but live elsewhere.
- 2.1.34 The Port has permission to expand its business through a major re-configuration of the port area and its deep water berths. If or when it does, the potential exists for the housing imbalance to get worse unless measures are introduced to address this. At a time when planning policy is aimed at reducing the need to travel to minimise the use of finite energy resources and the production of greenhouse gases, the current development pattern may not be sustainable. Additionally, the local economy does not benefit if these in-commuters spend their wages elsewhere, rather than support shops and services in the town and villages.
- 2.1.35 To avoid an over-reliance on the Port, Felixstowe may need to diversify its economy to offer new opportunities. To do this it may need a different and distinct employment development away from the Port. Non port-related businesses find it difficult to find premises in Felixstowe and have located elsewhere. There is a shortage of small light industrial and warehouse units but an over supply of large warehouses and dated office space.
- 2.1.36 The town centre continues to hold an important role not least in terms of its retail and service provision. An analysis of the town centre is as follows (Sources 2003 Retail Study & 2006 David Lock Study):

#### The “Health Check”

- Above average comparison provision, a good balance of service uses
- Limited number of “key attractions”, but relatively high % of multiple retailers
- Relatively good choice of convenience stores
- Vacancy rate of 10% is consistent with UK average

#### Quantitative Assessment

- Convenience goods - little capacity for additional space,
- Potential to recapture “leaked” trade
- Comparison goods - potential for additional 4,381 sq. m net by 2016
- Development opportunities are limited

#### Overall

- A vital and viable centre, but there is scope to:
- Increase retail unit sizes
- Improve the pedestrian environment and environmental quality
- and:
- There is the potential for significant decline in commercial vitality due to falling population within the local catchment in the absence of increased availability of housing

- 2.1.37 Recent environmental enhancement schemes have seen marked effects in the appearance of the town centre. These should be continued. The need to cater for all sections of the community however remains an issue.
- 2.1.38 Elsewhere within the Peninsula, Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary are the adjacent settlements along the main road and rail links heading inland away from Felixstowe and the coast. Sandwiched between these transport routes, both settlements are well linked and well related to Felixstowe. Past levels of growth at each of these settlements reflect this fact. The villages have however retained their individual character and provide a range of services for the benefit of residents, commensurate with that of key service centres.
- 2.1.39 The **Vision for the Felixstowe Peninsula South** (Felixstowe, Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary) in 2021 is for an integrated area that:
- a) Has embraced the opportunities for regeneration, growth and change whilst continuing to retain the separate identities of the individual settlements and communities concerned and creating high quality environments;
  - b) Has maintained and protected the high quality and variety of the built environments;
  - c) Has provided additional housing to accommodate the existing and some new population, by making maximum use of brownfield opportunities prior to creation of fully serviced new localities.
  - d) Has maximised the opportunities created by additional levels of development to provide an extended comprehensive range and scale of facilities distributed between the settlements for the benefit of the wider area and the older and newer communities;
  - e) Provides a scale and range of housing to meet the needs of the existing and future populations to provide a more sustainable balance between housing and employment provision; and providing the opportunity to reduce commuting;
  - f) Has expanded the quality and availability of public transport provision between the settlements to improve access to jobs and other local services and facilities;
  - g) Has expanded the local employment base to provide a wider range and choice of employment type and site, alongside that provided by an expanded Port function;
  - h) Has forged strong economic, social and cultural links between the town and the Port for the benefit of both;
  - i) Has developed its tourism role in terms of services, facilities and accommodation, which builds on the qualities and facilities offered by the town of Felixstowe, creating strong links between the seafront and town centre areas and the qualities of the surrounding natural environment;
  - j) Has expanded the retail, service and other facilities available within the town centre commensurate to meet the needs of the whole population both resident and visitor; and

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- k) Is well defended from risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

### **Framlingham**

- 2.1.40 Framlingham is a small market town lying at the heart of a predominantly agricultural area, well known for the high quality of its built environment, which is centred on the College and Castle. Although the town is situated at the focus of several minor traffic routes, it is relatively isolated. This isolation gives it an atmosphere of independence and almost self-sufficiency. On account of its position and character, the town fulfils several functions:
- (i) a local shopping, education and service centre with an extensive sphere of influence;
  - (ii) a minor employment centre, originally based largely on old-established agricultural and service industries. A recent shift towards high technology and service industry is evident. Some older industrial buildings are vacant ;
  - (iii) a residential town, with increasing commuting out to larger centres such as Ipswich and Woodbridge. There has been substantial new development in recent years and a period of consolidation and “settling down” may be desired locally;
  - (iv) a tourist centre, reflecting the special character and attraction of its historic core and castle.
- 2.1.41 The central area, together with the castle, College and extensive water meadows around the Mere have been designated a Conservation Area because of their importance and relationship to each other. As a result there are sites, gaps, or gardens that it is considered should be retained in their open form. This includes playing fields that create an open, green area and contribute to the setting of the College.
- 2.1.42 The physical constraints in the town centre in terms of buildings of historic interest, archaeological remains, particularly in the Riverside/Bridge Street area, and medieval street patterns mean that any new development would have to be in keeping and complementary to the surrounding areas.
- 2.1.43 The recent growth in population has placed pressure on the provision of services and local infrastructure. As a result there are issues raised as to the need for community meeting places, allotments and a cemetery. In terms of infrastructure, the ability of the local road system to accommodate traffic and the supply of water are concerns.
- 2.1.44 Retailing is concentrated around Market Hill, Bridge Street and Church Street, with additional shopping frontages along Albert Place and Well Close Square. The principal supermarket in the town centre is a recent addition and has materially improved the town's ability to cater for main food shopping.
- 2.1.45 The proportion of comparison retailing in the town centre is marginally below the national average. However, this disguises the fact that a large proportion of the comparison retailing is geared towards tourism, evidenced by the high representation of antique shops, art galleries, craft shops and bookshops.

2.1.46 An analysis of the town centre is as follows: (Source 2003 Retail Study)

<p>The “Health Check”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good range of independent comparison (often tourism related) retailers</li> <li>• Very low vacancy rate (6%)</li> <li>• Moderate accessibility</li> <li>• Attractive environment and important tourist centre</li> </ul> <p>Quantitative Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No quantitative need to increase food retailing floorspace</li> </ul> <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vital and viable town centre</li> <li>• An attractive and important tourist destination</li> </ul>
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2.1.47 The **Vision for Framlingham** in 2021 is a small town that:

- Retains its historic quality character without suffering the effects of “town cramming”;
- Retains a healthy retail and service offer, serving both “old” and “new” town residents alike, its hinterland and visitor populations;
- Has sufficient services and facilities, particularly health, education and community facilities to serve the population profile;
- Has maximised the opportunity to redevelop vacant brownfield land on the edge of the settlement to create new mixed use development of housing and employment, tailored to meet the needs of the local population;
- Has increased the scale and range of the employment offer;
- Retains the sensitive setting and edges of the town;
- Retains its role as a tourist centre, offering a range of accommodation and visitor attractions and facilities, but ensuring that any retail element is balanced so as not to detract from that available and designed to serve the needs of the local resident population
- Has benefited from improved utility provision; and
- Has created improved access to the town centre through improvements to the town car parks, linked to improved local public transport provision.

## Leiston

2.1.48 The profile of Leiston is one of a relatively compact centre located in a largely rural area. The surrounding countryside is extremely attractive and part of the parish of Leiston cum Sizewell lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The hamlet of Sizewell retains its historic charm.

2.1.49 With regard to the town, part of the town centre is a designated conservation area and other parts of the old town retain their character. Other areas again make an important contribution to the setting or character of a particular part of the town in its undeveloped form. Such areas include Goldings Lane, where the trees, hedges and large plots give it a rural character

2.1.50 The early growth of the town was largely related to its function as an employment centre, particularly engineering, with one large employer - Richard Garrett. This has created a character quite distinct from the other market towns within the district. Since its demise, some diversification has occurred with new industrial estates being developed.

2.1.51 The construction and operation of two nuclear power stations at Sizewell created considerable employment, but given the decommissioning of station ‘A’ it is important to continue to broaden the employment-base. There is an outstanding extant planning permission for employment use on a site on Abbey Road.

- 2.1.52 Subject to compatibility with nuclear safeguarding restrictions there remain opportunities for infilling, groups or even small estate-scale housing developments. These may be acceptable, given the potential benefits of affordable housing and expenditure in the town centre.
- 2.1.53 The community is pursuing a central facility that would combine community activities with health services. Elsewhere community needs are expected to consist of open space, allotments and a new cemetery.
- 2.1.54 Leiston town centre is a compact centre incorporating a wide range of uses, including retail dispersed with a mixture of residential and commercial uses. It is not considered that there is any quantitative deficiency in food retailing in the town centre. Even so, the important role that food retailing, and in particular, the food-store on Sizewell Road, performs in underpinning the role of the town centre is recognised. It is considered that Leiston is potentially vulnerable to the effects of any diversion of convenience retail trade. Unlike Aldeburgh tourism does not play a significant role in Leiston and there is no desire locally to actively promote it, although new provision would generally still be welcome. This means that expenditure derived from the resident population is not likely to be supplemented to any significant degree by income generated from tourists or visitors.
- 2.1.55 An analysis of the town centre is as follows: (Source 2003 Retail Study)

<p>The “Health Check”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An adequate comparison provision</li> <li>• High number of public houses/takeaway restaurants</li> <li>• High number of vacant units</li> <li>• Relatively good access</li> <li>• Environmental quality in need of enhancement</li> </ul> <p>Quantitative assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capacity for convenience floorspace expansion, but room for qualitative improvements</li> <li>• No clear development opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A potentially vulnerable centre, lacking a strong tourist trade</li> <li>• A dispersed retail frontage</li> <li>• Recent enhancement scheme of major benefit but still signs of physical dilapidation</li> </ul>
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- 2.1.56 The **Vision for Leiston** in 2021 is a small town that:
- a) Has experienced only limited new development in the form of new housing provision, with priority being given to affordable housing to meet local needs;
  - b) Has worked within the nuclear safeguarding limits to maintain the vibrancy of the town, with efforts being concentrated on retaining and improving the quality and range of facilities available to local residents and an improved physical environment;
  - c) Has retained and expanded its employment base;
  - d) Has accepted and embraced an incremental improvement in its tourism offer; and
  - e) Has protected and enhanced the sensitive settings to the town.

### **Saxmundham**

- 2.1.57 Saxmundham functions as a small market town serving quite a wide surrounding rural catchment area. Now that the A12 Trunk road passes by the town, the High Street is a more attractive place to shop and this shopping function should be enhanced.
- 2.1.58 The presence of the A12 road and the railway makes the town a popular residential area and there are large estates close to completion. A period of consolidation and “settling down” of

the community might be beneficial. With limited employment provision within the town and good road and rail links to centres such as Lowestoft, Felixstowe and Ipswich there is a danger of the town becoming over-reliant on employment provision elsewhere and falling into more of a dormitory role.

- 2.1.59 Public facilities and services (e.g. health, education, youth facilities and library facilities) will need to be reassessed in the context of this expanding population. New or expanded services may be necessary.
- 2.1.60 The combination of new housing and existing employment uses create some form of self-sufficiency and reduced commuting. The largest employment area is the Carlton Park industrial estate and this may need to be supplemented by additional areas and the protection of existing sites.
- 2.1.61 The location of a railway station in the centre of the town is not exploited sufficiently in order to cut down on travel by car. Additional car parking at the station, as well as interchange facilities with bus services, may be required.
- 2.1.62 The Town Centre is designated a Conservation Area, largely the result of a pleasing consistency of scale, materials and styles, which add to the spaces around the Market Place and the curving alignment of the High Street. The character of the eastern side of the town is largely derived from the immediate presence of the River Fromus, public access to the banks of which is extremely limited.
- 2.1.63 Like Aldeburgh the town centre of Saxmundham is not situated in the geographical centre of the town. It is linear in form and the largest convenience store is well integrated with it. Of prime concern would be any development that would be likely to lead to an unacceptable shift in focus of the town centre to the detriment of its overall vitality and viability.
- 2.1.64 The High Street represents the prime-shopping frontage in the Town Centre. There is already, however, an incursion of non-shopping uses such as banks, offices, estate agents and hotels/public houses. It is important to ensure that such uses do not occur in such numbers and such concentrations as to create 'dead' frontages, which could prejudice the role of the street as the prime shopping area, thereby harming its vitality and viability.
- 2.1.65 An analysis of the town centre is as follows: (Source 2003 Retail Study)

<p>The "Health Check"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High proportion of A2 uses/limited range of comparison goods</li> <li>• Reasonably low (and falling) vacancy rate</li> <li>• Easily accessible by road, rail and bus services</li> <li>• A generally attractive built environment</li> </ul> <p>Quantitative assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenience goods - capacity for further floorspace</li> <li>• Comparison floorspace could be increased</li> </ul> <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While Saxmundham has low unit vacancies: it could be a vulnerable retail environment</li> <li>• There is need for investment to enhance the area</li> </ul>
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- 2.1.66 The **Vision for Saxmundham** in 2021 is that of a small market town that:
- Has consolidated its role as a market town providing for the range of retail, social and community needs of its resident population and rural hinterland;
  - Has seen a further up-grading of the physical environment within the town centre, improving its appeal to both residents and tourists;

- c) Has increased its employment base to offer improved job prospects within the local area; and
- d) Has made improvements to the local railway station to encourage more use to be made of local public transport provision.

## Woodbridge

- 2.1.67 Woodbridge exhibits many of the attractive features of the classic English country town, having developed gradually over a period of 700 years without any major disturbance. Today, the central area retains a rich heritage from these past centuries, as can be seen in individual buildings, groups of buildings and in the medieval street pattern. Its unique historic form and character has resulted in the town becoming one of a number of important tourist centres in the district.
- 2.1.68 Although there are some limited employment opportunities its employment function is not as significant today as it would have been in the past. Nevertheless, it will be important to resist the loss of the employment potential of areas to other unsuitable uses and to ensure that development does not take place to the detriment of other objectives of the Plan. At the same time, it will be important to seek to make maximum use of the land and buildings.
- 2.1.69 Historically for its employment base the town relied on a boat building industry. Although the function of Woodbridge has changed over the years the maritime heritage is still prevalent in the sites and premises along the riverside. An important objective will be to seek to protect the employment use of this area along with the historic character.
- 2.1.70 The physical limits boundary of the Woodbridge 'Town' includes parts of the parishes of Martlesham and Melton, as in the latter case, the parish boundary extends almost to the town centre of Woodbridge. Within Woodbridge are a number of open spaces that make a considerable contribution to the character of the settlement and should be retained. This includes numerous trees and woodlands which, together with the undulating landform, are important components of distant views of the town from the AONB and elsewhere. Overall, the impression is one of an attractive, green backcloth.
- 2.1.71 The A12 clearly provides a firm edge to the town and the land beyond, which is of a different and distinct quality and character. That character should not be eroded by further development, and the District Council will operate a very strong restraint policy in the area to the west of the A12.
- 2.1.72 The town centre is based largely upon the historic street pattern comprising The Thoroughfare, Church Street and Market Hill. The primary shopping frontage is located on the Thoroughfare between Church Street and Elmhurst Walk. The town includes two small shopping centres; these are the Turban Shopping Centre and Gobbitts Yard, both of which are on the south side of The Thoroughfare. The principal supermarket in the town centre is located within the Turban shopping centre. The town centre has a strong provision of small independent convenience retailers, which perform an important role in contributing to the town's vitality and viability. Many of its food and non-food shops are specialised, catering for both a local demand and for an increasing tourist trade. It is important to maintain and enhance the viability and vitality.
- 2.1.73 Within the Town Centre there are numerous residential units interspersed with shops, offices and other services. These mixed uses give the town its character, and residential units of accommodation can give the town life at night and help deter vandalism. The establishment of residential accommodation in the Town Centre should be encouraged but not to the detriment of the function of Woodbridge as a shopping centre. This is particularly important within the Prime Shopping Area.
- 2.1.74 There will need to be continued monitoring of car park usage and further positive provision should it prove necessary. This monitoring will also assist the Council in achieving an optimum balance between long-term and short-term facilities.

2.1.75 An analysis of the town centre is as follows: (Source 2003 Retail Study)

<p>The “Health Check”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good comparison and convenience representation</li> <li>• A diverse and strong independent retail sector, vital to the town</li> <li>• Retail rents rising strongly in last 6 years</li> <li>• Low vacancy level but an increasing one</li> <li>• Accessibility is generally good</li> <li>• An excellent environmental quality</li> </ul> <p>Quantitative assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenience goods - limited capacity for additional floorspace</li> <li>• Comparison goods - capacity for further floorspace, assuming a high market share is maintained (recent developments may have created this)</li> </ul> <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An attractive, vital and viable market town, performing well</li> </ul>
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2.1.76 The **Vision for Woodbridge** in 2021 is for a small market town that:

- Retains the quality of the built environment
- Has experienced limited growth on a range of sites across the town
- Has enhanced and thereby strengthened the links between the town centre, Market Hill and the riverside.
- Enjoys a vibrant riverside environment that incorporates a range of uses. Residential uses in this area will have been resisted to ensure employment uses and its tourism and amenity offers are not jeopardised.
- Has maintained and enhanced the quality of its town centre through the encouragement of small scale, independent retail businesses but nonetheless provides a balanced range of provision to meet the needs of residents – both locally and from the rural catchment area - and tourists.
- Actively manages traffic and visitors to the town and surrounding area through the use of suitable car parking and signage; and
- Encourages wider use of public transport.

### **Ipswich Policy Area**

2.1.77 This area incorporates the parishes of Brightwell, Foxhall, Little Bealings, Martlesham, Nacton, Playford, Purdis Farm, Rushmere St. Andrew and the town of Kesgrave. It is a diverse area of villages and suburban housing estates on the edge of Ipswich. Concentrated particularly on the area of Kesgrave, Foxhall and Purdis Farm, this is the only area within the District where the Regional Spatial Strategy specifies that new housing development should be provided. (3,200 new units).

2.1.78 Situated between the main urban area of Ipswich and the strategic employment site at Martlesham Heath, this area is well placed in relation to major retail, employment and other social and community facilities. It is well served by public transport provision and foot and cycle paths. Nonetheless, the main A1214 remains heavily used and further development will need to take this into account.

2.1.79 The area has been the subject of considerable new building in recent years. The new and existing communities are still adjusting. It remains a concern that the different nature and character of the existing older settlements and the newer developments should be retained.

- 2.1.80 As part of this on-going adjustment some change is expected to the catchment area of the Schools. Further social and community provision is being provided alongside new housing provision for which planning permission already exists but remains to be built out.
- 2.1.81 The location of the Foxhall Stadium speedway track remains an issue, but provides an important facility of more than local importance.
- 2.1.82 By 2024, the existing household waste site at Foxhall Road will be restored to a country park providing another important facility within the locality.
- 2.1.83 The **Vision for the Ipswich Policy Area** in 2021 is:
- a) An area which has created its own distinctive identity with smaller readily distinguishable neighbourhoods and communities within the larger area;
  - b) An area which has embraced change and maximised opportunities to provide a full range of social and community facilities to complement and build on those already present for the benefit of existing and future populations;
  - c) An area which includes a mix of uses, and size, type and tenure of dwellings to enable the creation of more sustainable communities;
  - d) An area where public transport provision, foot and cycle paths have been upgraded and promoted to minimise the need to use private motor vehicles to access employment, schools and other key facilities;
  - e) An area where development has been phased and scaled to ensure that new or upgraded utility and other social and community provision is provided in advance of or parallel to new housing and employment provision;
  - f) An area where priority has been given to creating a safe and attractive environment, including the provision of advanced planting and landscaping to create new settlement boundaries that blend with the surrounding landscape; and
  - g) An area where opportunities for new employment provision have been maximised, particularly those associated with the strategically important hi-tech business at BT and through the provision of new business starter units.

#### QUESTIONS – VISIONS FOR 2021

##### The District

Q1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's Vision for the district?  
STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE/DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE

Q2 Does the Vision cover all of the issues you think it should? Y/N  
If NO what other issues do you think it should include?

##### The Towns

Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's Vision for each of the towns?  
STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE/DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE

Q4 Does the Vision cover all of the issues you think it should? Y/N  
If NO what other issues do you think it should include?

# THE CORE STRATEGY & OPTIONS

## THE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

### Theme 1 – Achieving a Better Quality of Life

To ensure that development supports the principles of sustainable development and secures sustainable communities

## 2.2 THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

### HEADLINE FACTS – SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

- Spatial policies whilst being geographically based take into consideration the way in which an area is used and functions i.e. wider than a strictly land-use based policy
- The period of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy is 2001 to 2021.
- The period of this Local Development Framework is also to 2021.

### The **Community Strategy** identifies as **ITS VISION**:

Building upon the best of the present, Suffolk Coastal should be a district where people want to live and to invest, and care for others and the environment

### *You have told us the issues are:*

- Accommodating growth in a sustainable manner
- Having regard to the aspirations of the communities themselves

## 2.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Draft Objective 1 – Sustainable Development and Sustainable Communities

**To deliver more integrated and sustainable patterns of land use, movement, activity and development and to contribute to the creation of sustainable communities.**

- 2.3.1 The twin principles of sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities are central to the new planning system. Simply expressed, the concept of sustainable development means ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, both present and future generations. In relation to sustainable communities it means working toward communities which are active, inclusive and safe, well run, environmentally sensitive, well designed and built, well connected, thriving, well served, fair for everyone, and diverse, reflecting their local circumstances. These twin principles are required to underlie and support all new development plan documents (DPD's).
- 2.3.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) translates these national principles to the regional level. It seeks to achieve a sustainable relationship between jobs, homes and services at both the strategic and local level. Conserving the environment, quality of life, local character and natural resources are also important. Tackling the problems of social inclusion and deprivation are key strands in achieving sustainable development. It is the role of Suffolk Coastal's Core Strategy to cascade these principles further to the local level, tailoring them to address local circumstances.
- 2.3.3 Given that sustainable development and sustainable communities are central to government policy there are no alternative options as to whether or not to include it as an overriding aspiration of the Plan. The issue is how best to address it in the Core Strategy and other Local Development Documents.

### Alternative Options

- 2.3.4 Option One. Under this option the Core Strategy would simply repeat policy SS1 of the RSS. However, this is considered unnecessary given the fact that the RSS will form part of the Development Plan.

2.3.5 Option Two A second option is to include instead, a set of Core Principles relating to sustainable development and sustainable communities based around government advice and the RSS, but that highlights the aspects of sustainable development and sustainable communities considered critical to the Suffolk Coastal district. This approach avoids unnecessary repetition and has the added benefit of making it more relevant to the Suffolk Coastal District Area.

2.3.6 Issues of particular relevance to the district of Suffolk Coastal might be:

- (a) Provision of sufficient housing to meet the needs of current and future populations, in a way which is both sustainable, appropriate to the widely varying communities which make up the District, and avoids or minimises the negative impacts which can arise from development
- (b) The application of a defined settlement hierarchy itself based on sustainability principles;
- (c) The achievement of quality local services accessible to all sections of the community;
- (d) The conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment;
- (e) Enabling a healthy economy, notably in the rural areas;
- (f) Maintaining and enhancing a sense of place; and
- (g) Transport accessibility to services and an integrated and sustainable transport system.

## 2.4 A SPATIAL STRATEGY - SETTLEMENTS

### HEADLINE FACTS – SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

- The district contains over 100 settlements of varying size and function, from the urban areas of Felixstowe and the Ipswich Policy Area, to small rural settlements containing less than 50 dwellings.
- The number, range and size of settlement type contribute to the quality and character of the district, making it an attractive area to live, work, visit and invest.
- About 60% of the resident population live within the urban areas of Felixstowe and the Ipswich fringe as well as the five market towns of Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Leiston, Saxmundham and Woodbridge.
- Felixstowe and the market towns are the highest order retail and service centres within the district, catering for both the resident population and tourist trade.
- Abutting the district in the south is the regional centre of Ipswich.
- Strategic employment sites including the port of Felixstowe and the BT site at Martlesham Heath are located to the south of the district closest to the existing centres of population and primary transport network (road, rail and bus).
- The vast majority of settlements within the district are rural in character with limited access to services and facilities. Transport in these areas is predominantly by means of private motor vehicles due to limited availability of public transport provision.

The **Community Strategy** identifies as one of its priorities:

**Access to Services:** Investigating new ways to address the decline in local services and the limitations of public transport, especially in the rural areas

***You have told us the issues are:***

- Future development should be located in areas where access to day-to day facilities and services are available by public transport, cycling and walking.
- Development sites should be available in a range of sizes. Smaller developments should be encouraged in local communities to meet local needs
- The role of the market towns as retail, service and employment centres should be supported
- Land should be made available for affordable housing to meet local needs
- Further clarification should be provided as to what is meant by a sustainable viable rural community

**SETTLEMENT CLASSIFICATION**

**Draft Objective 2 – Settlement Policy**

**To ensure that the number and distribution of new houses and jobs are balanced and reflect sustainable principles, including making greater use of previously developed land, whilst respecting the character of settlements and local surroundings. In doing so to sustain viable rural communities and deliver more integrated patterns of land-use, movement, activity and development.**

- 2.4.1 Establishing a settlement hierarchy is a fundamental pre-requisite to identifying a range of possible spatial development options. It is this that will determine the level and density of new development considered acceptable for each level within the hierarchy, and from this, the possible development combinations, that could realistically meet the housing and employment requirements for the district, as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy. It also involves identifying and assessing what are considered appropriate levels of services and facilities including retail, for each settlement type, with the aim of maintaining and where appropriate extending existing levels of provision.
- 2.4.2 In accordance with the principles of sustainable development and sustainable communities, the RSS requires that the major centres be the focus of the largest scale of development. Thereafter it states that development will be focused in market towns and then at key service centres. In all other rural settlements and related communities it states that local authorities should consider the potential to accommodate new development, sympathetic to local character and of an appropriate scale and nature, including local employment and housing need. The Core Strategy needs to consider a settlement hierarchy based on that set out at the national and regional levels.

**Alternative Options**

- 2.4.3 Option One. This option would continue the settlement hierarchy as currently set out in the adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (incorporating the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Alterations). Under this option settlements are identified primarily on their physical size. To continue with it is essentially a “do nothing” approach. Such a hierarchy would contain levels as follows:

**Option 1 - Settlement Policy “Do Nothing”**

The following settlement hierarchy would continue to be used in determining the scale of development appropriate in a particular location.

**Major Centres** - defined as settlements capable of development for strategic purposes.

**Market Towns** - settlements capable of expansion, including estate scale development, where such development would support the role of the settlement, contribute to regeneration and not be detrimental to their character and setting

**Large Villages** – settlements suitable for new development consisting of groups of houses and infilling

**Small Villages** – settlements where development would be confined to infilling only.

**Countryside** - settlements where the presumption is against new development unless it can be justified as a rural exception. These comprise the hamlets and small groups of dwellings that are dispersed across the district. These are considered to form part of the countryside.

Other than in respect of 'Countryside', physical limits boundaries will be drawn for each of the settlements. The physical limits will be drawn to reflect the main built area of the settlement. Outside these physical limits the land will be deemed to be "Countryside" except where specific policies or allocations apply. Once allocated land is developed it will be incorporated into the physical limits of the settlement to which it relates.

- 2.4.4 Option 1 has the benefit of being simple in its approach. However, it provides little guidance to distinguish between settlements of 25 or 1000+ dwellings. It also fails to reflect the current emphasis on sustainable settlements and the need to look at the function of settlements as well as their size. The approach therefore fails to accord with latest advice in the RSS to which the Local Development Framework (LDF) is required to conform as it cannot distinguish, or provide the basis for distinguishing, even those settlements which are key service centres from others. To progress with this option might therefore risk the LDF failing the key test of soundness thereby undermining the Development Plan Document (DPD) as a whole.
- 2.4.5 Option 2. Under this option the settlement hierarchy is re-defined based on a combination of function and physical form. It reflects much more closely what actually happens on the ground, i.e. looking at individual communities and how and at what level they operate. It provides a finer-grained approach to the range of settlement types that exist across the district. Settlements are categorised according to sustainability factors including size, level of facilities, their role in relation to their locality, as well as their physical form. This will ensure that the number and distribution of new houses and jobs are balanced and reflect sustainable principles whilst respecting the character of settlements and local surroundings. On the one level the hierarchy reflects the situation as it currently exists "on the ground". It recognises and acknowledges individual roles. At a second level, it provides the framework within which settlements considered to be sustainable are able to continue to grow and develop or to consolidate their existing role. Development is therefore expressed in terms of three key uses, access (or lack of access) to which, is considered to underpin quality of life. This includes housing, employment and retail (including access to services and facilities) uses.
- 2.4.6 Under this Option the levels would be as follows:

#### **Option 2 - Settlement Policy Based on Principles of Sustainability**

The following settlement hierarchy would be used in determining the scale of development appropriate in a particular location.

**Major Centres** - defined as settlements capable of development for strategic purposes.

**Market Towns** - settlements capable of expansion, including estate scale development, where such development would support the role of the settlement, contribute to regeneration and not be detrimental to their character and setting

**Key Service Centres** – settlements which provide the full range of specified facilities and are capable of sustaining some minor expansion, groups of houses and infilling

**Local Service Centres** – settlements providing a smaller range of facilities than the key service centres. Development within these settlements would be confined to, dependent

on their individual character, infilling or small groups which address specific local economic, social or community objectives. Also includes settlements that contain a smaller range of facilities but link with neighbouring settlements (as a “cluster”), so as to between them provide for a greater range of facilities and services that go a long way to meeting all day to day needs of the wider locality.

**Other Villages** - settlements with few or minimal facilities where the presumption is against new development unless it can be justified as a rural exception. These comprise the hamlets and small groups of dwellings that are dispersed across the district. These are considered to form part of the countryside.

Other than in respect of Other Villages, physical limits boundaries will be drawn for each of the settlements. The physical limits will be drawn to reflect the main built area of the settlement. Outside these physical limits the land will be deemed to be “Countryside” except where specific policies or allocations apply. Once allocated land is developed it will be incorporated into the physical limits of the settlement to which it relates.

**2.4.7 In order to assist local communities in assessing where they think their settlement should be placed in the hierarchy; and what the implications of their positioning within the hierarchy might be, the following schedule has been drawn up based on Option 2 above, were this to be the Council’s ultimate preference.**

**THIS SCHEDULE IS AN EXAMPLE AND PUBLISHED FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.**

**TABLE 1 - SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY**

Settlement Classification	Attributes	Settlements	Scale of Development		
			Housing	Employment	Retail
<b>Major Centre</b>	Urban area  Regional or sub-regional catchment area  Wide range of employment and commercial activity  Social facilities such as health and education	Felixstowe and the Trimleys’  Ipswich Fringe i.e. Kesgrave Martlesham Heath Purdis Farm Rushmere St Andrew (excluding the village)	Allocations of large scale development to meet strategic needs  Within the defined limits development in the form of: Estates Groups Infill  Affordable housing: One third of new allocations One in three units in all developments of 6 units or more in size	Felixstowe - Strategic employment site linked to port.  Ipswich fringe - Strategic employment sites at Adastral Park.  Limited local employment provision elsewhere. Some new small scale business./service use (B1/A2 provision appropriate within the new housing areas linked to local/district service centres	Felixstowe - Should incorporate a range of provision including convenience store, supermarket, and comparison goods.  Walton – district centre  Martlesham Heath – existing out of town centre comprising retail park and superstore.  District centres at Kesgrave, Martlesham Heath and Bixley Farm

Settlement Classification	Attributes	Settlements	Scale of Development		
			Housing	Employment	Retail
<b>Market Town</b>	<p>Focal point for employment, shopping and community facilities</p> <p>Transport hub</p>	<p>Aldeburgh Framlingham Leiston Saxmundham Woodbridge (with part of Melton &amp; Martlesham)</p>	<p>Allocations in the form of: estate scale development if/where appropriate</p> <p>Within the defined limits development in the form of: Estates Groups Infill</p> <p>Affordable Housing: One third of each new allocation One in three units in all developments of 6 units or more in size Exception sites on the edges of the physical limits of the town</p>	<p>Range of general and local employment opportunities. Emphasis on retention of existing businesses and areas in employment use to provide opportunities both for expansion and start-up.</p> <p>Opportunities to improve and expand on the existing tourism offer will generally be encouraged where they would be in sympathy with the character and scale of the town</p>	<p>Convenience, supermarket, and comparison shopping provision.</p> <p>Emphasis will be on retaining range of provision to meet the needs of the town and its hinterland whilst supporting their role as local tourist centres.</p>
<b>Key Service Centre</b>	<p>At least</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public transport access to a town</li> <li>• Shop(s) meeting day to day needs</li> <li>• Local employment opportunities</li> <li>• Meeting place</li> <li>• Post office</li> <li>• Pub or licensed premises</li> <li>• Primary school</li> <li>• Doctors Surgery</li> </ul>	<p>Alderton Aldringham; Blythburgh, Bramfield, Dennington, Earl Soham, Eyke, Grundisburgh, Hollisley, Kirton, Knodishall, Martlesham Village, Melton Village, Orford, Otley, Peasenhall, Rendlesham, Snape, Ufford, Westleton, Wickham Market, Wivesham, Yoxford</p>	<p>Allocations in the form of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor extensions to some villages to meet local needs</li> </ul> <p>Within the defined physical limits development in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups</li> <li>• Infill</li> </ul> <p>Affordable Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two thirds of each new allocation</li> <li>• One in three units in all developments of 3 units or more in size</li> <li>• Exception sites on the edges of the physical limit boundaries</li> </ul>	<p>Limited range of employment opportunities but mainly local.</p> <p>Emphasis on retention of existing businesses and areas in employment use to provide opportunities for expansion and start-up.</p>	<p>Small range of comparison and convenience shopping.</p> <p>Emphasis will be on retention of existing provision</p> <p>District centre - Wickham Market</p>

Settlement Classification	Attributes	Settlements	Scale of Development		
			Housing	Employment	Retail
<b>Local Service Centres</b>	<p>A range of facilities, at least 3 from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transport access to a town</li> <li>Shop(s) meeting day to day needs</li> <li>Local employment opportunities</li> <li>Meeting place</li> <li>Post office</li> <li>Pub or licensed premises</li> </ul>	<p>Badingham, Bawdsey, Bucklesham, Benhall Blaxhall, Brandeston Bredfield Bromeswell Butley, Campsea Ashe, Charsfield, Chillesford, Clopton, Cretingham Dallinghoo, Darsham Dunwich, Easton, Friston;Great Bealings, Hacheston Hasketon Kelsale, Kettleburgh, Levington, Little Bealings, Little Glemham Marlesford, Middleton, Nacton, Parham Pettistree Rendham Rushmere St Andrew (village) Shottisham, Stratford St Andrew, Sutton, Sutton Heath, Swilland; Theberton, Tuddenham, Tunstall, Walberswick, Waldringfield, Wenhaston, Westerfield</p>	<p>Within the defined physical limits development as appropriate in the form of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups and/or</li> <li>Infill</li> </ul> <p>Affordable Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One in three units in all developments of 3 units or more in size;</li> <li>Exception sites on the edges of the physical limits boundaries</li> </ul>	<p>Where provision exists emphasis will be on retention. Potential for expansion likely to be limited due to environmental and infrastructure limitations.</p> <p>New provision most likely to be provided through conversion/re-use of existing buildings and have tangible links to the local area.</p>	<p>Convenience shopping. This could include provision in the form of a farm shop, or similar linked /ancillary to another use.</p> <p>Emphasis will be on retention of existing provision.</p>
<b>Other Villages</b>	Minimal facilities	<p>Boyton, Bruisyard, Chediston, Cransford, Cratfield, Falkenham, Farnham, Foxhall; Great Glemham Heveningham, Huntingfield, Newbourne Playford, Saxtead, Sudbourne, Sweffling; Walpole</p>	<p>No development (other than to meet local needs) and no defined physical limit boundary.</p> <p>Affordable Housing Development in the form of infill for local needs only</p>	<p>Existing employment where it exists is linked predominantly to agricultural industry or other rural businesses. Emphasis will be on retaining existing uses. Farm diversification and tourism uses may be appropriate.</p>	<p>Where no provision currently exists this situation is unlikely to change. This includes the provision of a farm shop or similar.</p>

Settlement Classification	Attributes	Settlements	Scale of Development		
			Housing	Employment	Retail
<b>Countryside</b>	No facilities	Boulge, Brightwell, Burgh, Capel St Andrew, Cookley, Culpho, Debach, Gedgrave, Hemley, Hoo, Iken, Letheringham, Linstead Magna, Linstead Parva, Monewden, Ramsholt, Sibton, Sternfield, Stratton Hall, Thorington, Ubbeston, Wantisden	No development and no defined physical limit boundary.  Affordable Housing None	Employment where it does exist is predominantly linked to agriculture or forestry. Farm diversification schemes and tourism uses may be appropriate.	Where no provision currently exists this situation is unlikely to change. This includes the provision of a farm shop or similar.

#### QUESTIONS - Settlement Hierarchy

- Q5 As an approach to identifying different settlement types, which of the options identified do you prefer?  
Option 1  
Option 2
- Q6. Using the example set out in Table 1, are the broad scales and types of development identified for each settlement type appropriate? Y/N  
  
If NO, why not?
- Q7 Using the example set out in Table 1, do you think any settlement is wrongly identified as a particular settlement type? Y/N  
  
If YES which settlement and why?

#### Wickham Market

- 2.4.8 A further Option exists in respect of Wickham Market. Although currently a large village, and potentially a key service centre if that particular Option is pursued, the settlement has a wide range of services and is close to being considered a market town. If so, there is the possibility that it could be a potential location for new housing development.

#### QUESTION - Wickham Market

- Q8 Do you think Wickham Market should be identified as a market town under the settlement hierarchy? YES/NO Please give reasons

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## **Physical Limits Boundaries**

### **Function and Purpose**

- 2.4.9 An important element of the Settlement Strategy will be the defining of physical limits. The main function of physical limits is to define the area within which most forms of development would be allowed. They are drawn in order to achieve the Settlement Strategy. The following guidelines have been devised in order to ensure consistency in the drawing up of those boundaries and reflect in large measure, the basis on which the physical limits boundaries are currently defined in the adopted Local Plan. They will also assist the Council in assessing proposals for development. Outside the physical limits the District will be defined as countryside where development will be strictly controlled and not permitted unless in conformity with other policies or the subject of specific allocations.
- 2.4.10 The Council will refer to individual community plans and seek to respect those plans wherever possible and practical when defining physical limits. Principles of sustainability will also be paramount (see section 2.3).
- 2.4.11 Physical limits will:
- Make it clear to the local community and potential developers where development will be acceptable.
  - Prevent development being spread throughout the countryside.
  - Protect the setting of towns and villages
- 2.4.12 Physical limits will not:
- Mean that all development proposals within them will be acceptable. A proposal must be consistent with other relevant policies.
  - Reflect or follow Parish boundaries.
- 2.4.13 The process of defining the physical limits boundary is:
- Firstly, to identify the main built form.
  - Secondly, to draw an 'envelope' around the built form.

### **The Built Form**

- 2.4.14 More often than not the built form will constitute the traditional heart of a settlement together with any expansion over the years, often in the form of groups of houses and estates.
- 2.4.15 The built form may contain open areas. These can be historic areas such as village greens and churchyards, but also areas of open space, small paddocks, allotments' and even large gardens. Such areas may be protected from development where they are the subject of local or national designations, or make an important contribution to:
- The street-scene or
  - The physical form and layout of the settlement.
- 2.4.16 Linear or 'ribbon' development will not be considered a built form or part of the built form if:
- It is separated from the main built form by a site, or area, so that it visually does not appear to constitute part of it.
  - The ribbon is fragmented, with large gaps created by gardens or tranches of countryside.
- 2.4.17 There may be occasions where a settlement has developed in a location away from its traditional heart, perhaps around a school or other feature or facility. Such areas may be considered to constitute a built form if:

- a) They are substantial in size and not merely a small group of houses or a hamlet.
- b) They contain community facilities such as a school, convenience store or village hall, or have safe and convenient access on foot to such facilities i.e. are considered to be 'sustainable'

### The Drawing of the 'Envelope'

2.4.18 A physical limits boundary or 'envelope' will be drawn around an appropriate built form. Wherever practical it will follow physical features such as field boundaries, roads and footpaths.

2.4.19 The line will not include the following:

- a) Large residential gardens and curtilages that are on the periphery and abut both the built form and the adjoining countryside.
- b) Open areas such as playing fields, cemeteries, allotments, orchards and natural habitats, which abut both the built form and the adjoining countryside.
- c) Farmyards and associated agricultural buildings that abut both the built form and the adjoining countryside.
- d) 'Fingers' of agricultural land, woodland, meadow, areas of water and natural habitats that penetrate the built form.

#### QUESTION - Physical Limits Boundaries

Q9 Do you agree with the suggested method for identifying physical limits boundaries? Y/N  
If NO, what changes would you suggest?

## 2.5 A SPATIAL STRATEGY - THE COUNTRYSIDE

### HEADLINE FACTS – COUNTRYSIDE

- Suffolk Coastal is a diverse district of nearly 90,000 hectares, incorporating coast, countryside, towns, suburbs and villages but is predominantly rural in character.
- Population density in the northern part of the district is as low as 10 per ha in places.
- 36% of the District is nationally designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 12% is designated as being of national or international importance for its nature conservation interest
- The District contains 55 km of coastline of which 50km is designated as Heritage Coast
- Around 5% of the working population are employed in agriculture, well above the average figure for either the East of England or Great Britain.
- Much of the district outside of the coast and towns is classified as grade 2 and 3 "best and most versatile" agricultural land, characterised by crops (vegetables, maize, rapeseed) and intensive pig breeding units.
- Large agricultural holdings dominate both in terms of field size and scale of production, supplying direct to the main supermarket chains.
- Significant numbers of people are employed in the horticulture business
- 10% of the district is given over to forestry/woodland, important both for its timber production and its recreation/tourism use
- The quality of the countryside is an important resource for the District's tourism industry, both day visitors, overnight stays and traditional holiday makers
- Levels of public transport, services and facilities in the rural area are limited.
- Access to many parts of the rural area within the district whilst not far in distance terms from the classified road network, is difficult, as they are serviced by single track roads with passing places.

The **Community Strategy** identifies two of its **key issues** as safeguarding, enhancing and managing the distinctive high quality of the environment of the district; and improving the process of estuary and coastal management; and

Under its **ambitions** – to maintain and enhance the prosperity of the rural areas and to promote opportunities for people to develop the skills they need; and to develop tourism

***You have told us the issues are:***

- There was no core objective relating to the protection of the countryside and coast
- In relation to the rural economy specific support should be provided for the farming industry
- Care needs to be taken to ensure that new businesses in the countryside are of an appropriate scale and have regard to the availability of infrastructure and services, particularly water.
- There is a balance between promoting tourism and the quality of the countryside and biodiversity.
- Promoting local distinctiveness is important

2.5.1 National policies and guidance require that the quality and character of the countryside is protected for its own sake and, where possible, enhanced. Particular regard is required to be had to any areas that have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities.

2.5.2 National policy also increasingly recognises the need for more regard to be had to rural issues and to the problems and opportunities these areas experience. Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) sets out the governments objectives for the rural areas as follows:

- a) To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas
- b) To promote more sustainable patterns of development
- c) To promote the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance so that they are able to reach their full potential; and
- d) To promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agricultural sectors

**Draft Objective 3 – Countryside**

**To provide a framework which will maintain and enhance the quality of the built and natural environment, whilst securing the long-term prosperity of those living and working within the rural area, including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**

**Alternative Options**

2.5.3 Option One – to continue with the existing policy of restraint as set out in the adopted Local Plan. Under this option the policy emphasis is to restrict development within the countryside excepting for a few specified exceptions. Development is expected to encompass the following categories:

1. agriculture, including horticulture
2. forestry
3. employment
4. housing to meet local needs (including extensions and replacements)
5. sites for gypsies and travellers (subject to the results of a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment survey)
6. community facilities
7. leisure and tourism
8. transportation projects
9. public utility projects

10. renewable energy projects
11. coastal defence
12. mineral extraction (subject to conformity with the Minerals LDF produced by the County Council) and
13. waste disposal (also subject to conformity with the Waste LDF produced by the County Council)

2.5.4 The policy has worked well in restricting unnecessary development within the rural areas. However this blanket type restriction on development lacks the subtlety to distinguish between the wide variety of uses and activities which currently take place within the rural areas, or to distinguish between those areas which are more sensitive to particular uses from those which are not.

2.5.5 Option Two – This option continues to reflect the government's overall aim of protecting the countryside for its own sake, for its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage, wildlife and natural resources. Within this however, government proposes a more proactive approach to guiding new development. It introduces a spatial element based primarily around those parts that are designated for their nature conservation or landscape value and those parts that are not. The new policy approach would provide more specific guidance as to the types and scale of uses likely to be acceptable (or not acceptable) within these broad areas, in similar fashion to the settlement hierarchy set out in Option Two above. This approach is considered to better reflect government guidance whilst tailoring it to reflect local circumstances and priorities. It would provide an appropriate framework of support for the myriad of businesses and uses that currently exist, particularly those related to the agricultural economy, whilst preserving the assets that make the district an attractive destination for tourists.

2.5.6 Under such an Option Proposals will be assessed against the following general issues:

In respect of the development itself:

- a) The need to be located in the countryside
- b) Whether the proposal could be accommodated within a settlement
- c) Social and economic benefits
- d) The cumulative impact

In respect of the location:

- a) The nature of the countryside in question – landform, skyline, vegetation, character, biodiversity etc
- b) Designations and the status of those designations, i.e. international, national, regional, county-wide or local
- c) Historic and cultural value
- d) Levels of remoteness
- e) Scale and impact, including visual, noise and general disturbance
- f) Sustainability
- h) Accessibility - including the generation of traffic and ability of the local road system to absorb traffic.

**QUESTIONS - Countryside**

Q10 When considering the long term future of the countryside which of the stated options do you generally prefer and why?

- Option 1
- Option 2

Q11 If you prefer Option 1, are there uses you would wish to see removed, or new uses added to the list?



# THE CORE STRATEGY & OPTIONS

## HOUSING

### Theme 2 - Housing

To encourage the improved provision of, and access to, appropriate housing to meet existing and future needs.

## 2.6 HOUSING

### HEADLINE FACTS - HOUSING

- The draft Regional Spatial Strategy identifies a guideline figure of 10,200 new dwellings for the district for the period 2001-2021. Within this figure up to 3,200 are to be provided within that part of the Ipswich Policy Area (IPA) situated within the Suffolk Coastal District Council area.
- The draft Regional Spatial Strategy requires an average construction rate of 510 dwellings per annum in the period to 2021. The current construction rate in the district is around 500 dwellings p.a.
- There were at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 outstanding planning permissions for 3125 units. A further 2699 had been constructed between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 leaving a residual total number of 4376 new dwellings to be provided within the remaining plan period.
- At the midpoint of 2005 the average price of a house in Suffolk Coastal was £175,240 compared with £155,423 (Suffolk) and £163,584 (the country).
- Statistics show that 58% of households within the district would not now be able to purchase even in the lowest sector of the market.
- The number of homeless households with dependant children approaching the Council for assistance has increased in recent years to just over 100 in 2005.
- The supply of housing is not meeting demand from within the communities
- The average household is getting smaller and older. The social changes leading to this ongoing decline in household size are expected to continue their historic trend.
- The district attracts many second homeowners (2,500 dwellings or 4.6% of the total dwellings at the 2001 census) or people retiring to the area, especially along the coast. In some parishes the level of second homes reaches as high as 30%.
- Gypsies and Romanies constitute a very low proportion of the population; in January 2005 three encampments each containing one vehicle were recorded
- The district is, however, a destination for Travellers
- The district currently contains no authorised sites for Gypsies or Travellers

### The **Community Strategy** identifies as **KEY ISSUES**:

- Affordable housing
- Assisting older people to live in their own homes and communities; and
- Providing support for vulnerable adults and young people

### *You have told us the issues are:*

- Lack of houses at prices affordable to local people.
- Lack of social rented housing.
- Imbalance between housing needs and supply.
- Second homeowners – denying local people the opportunity to buy units, particularly small ones.
- Efficient use of land and high densities may not reflect the character of the area.
- Retaining or creating small units of accommodation
- The potential imbalance between the supply of housing and the needs
- Development should be concentrated where access to facilities and services is available
- Development should be close to public transport provision
- Opportunities for development should be spread across the district

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## **POPULATION PROFILE**

- 2.6.1 The district has an ageing population with the highest proportion of people being aged between 45-64 (See Appendix 6). Most of the population are resident within the Felixstowe and Ipswich Policy Areas with the remaining market towns containing considerably fewer residents.
- 2.6.2 The predicted 2021 age structure (see Appendix 6) shows increasing proportions of older people particularly those over the age of 65 and a decreasing proportion of people in the most economically active age band of 25-44.
- 2.6.3 If this ageing population is combined with other social changes generally – marrying later in life, having children later in life and increasing divorce rates – the outcome is a decreasing average household size. The average household size in the district at 2.35 is already lower than the national average. Government projections suggest a fall by 10% to 2.1 nationally by 2026. This results in an increasing number of households and increasing demands for housing, even to meet the needs of the current population.
- 2.6.4 The population structure raises a number of issues in relation to meeting housing demand, and in helping to secure the Council's long-term vision for its area. These issues vary in extent between the different parts of the district.
- 2.6.5 A number of priorities have been identified including providing the right type of housing to attract and enable young people to remain within the district. At the other end of the spectrum, there is a need to address the needs of people as they get older. This may include looking to provide additional sheltered accommodation or smaller, more manageable units.
- 2.6.6 In addition, it is essential that housing be provided at the right price to enable people to access it. This includes providing a range of general market housing as well as affordable housing i.e. housing provided with some form of subsidy for those people unable to rent or buy at market levels. The 2006 Housing Needs Survey provides the evidence base for this.
- 2.6.7 Further requirements have or are in process of being identified, to meet more specialist types of accommodation including that for gypsies and travellers. A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is being undertaken jointly with the neighbouring authorities of Ipswich, Waveney, Mid-Suffolk and Babergh. This is due to report in spring 2007 and will feed into the plan process in due course.

## **NEW HOUSING**

### **Draft Objective 4 New Housing**

**To meet as a minimum, the district's housing requirements as identified in the regional spatial strategy for the period 2001-2021. This includes providing housing that will encourage younger people to remain in the district, but also addresses the needs of what is currently an ageing population.**

**Such provision to be made in a manner which addresses both the immediate needs of the local resident population and the longer-term future needs of the population, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and sustainable communities.**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

- 2.6.8 The Suffolk Coastal district contains the urban fringe of the county town of Ipswich, the substantial urban area of Felixstowe, five market towns, and around a hundred communities with populations ranging between 25 and 3600. This gives a wide choice about where to locate new housing and in what quantity.
- 2.6.9 If housing is located in the right places it can bring benefits of:
- a) Wider choice
  - b) Affordable housing
  - c) Support for local facilities
  - d) A reduction in the number of car journeys
  - e) Less strain on public services
- 2.6.10 Located in the wrong places and in the wrong volumes there are dangers of:
- a) Damage to local environments
  - b) More car use
  - c) Isolation
- 2.6.11 The approach towards deciding where new housing should be distributed involves:
- a) Assessing how much housing is required
  - b) Considering in broad terms how this should be distributed and
  - c) Looking for suitable sites
- 2.6.12 Each of these steps involves options and choices.

## **HOW MUCH HOUSING IS REQUIRED?**

- 2.6.13 The amount of new housing is set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), also known as the East of England Plan. This considers the district in the context of the region and identifies a requirement within Suffolk Coastal of 10,200 new houses between the years 2001 and 2021. The RSS Panel Report notes in relation to overall housing numbers that *"...an important element of the increase in the number of households (and therefore numbers of houses) is the trend to reducing household size. This reduction over time in household size, or the propensity of people to form separate households applies to the whole of the existing population as well as the growth from natural increase and migration."*
- 2.6.14 These figures are supported, indeed emphasised, by recent locally researched documents, notably the David Lock Report and the Housing Needs Survey
- 2.6.15 The draft RSS (again taking into account the SoS's Proposed Changes) apportions the housing requirement between the part of the district within the "Ipswich Policy Area" (IPA) and the part outside of it at 3,200 dwellings and 7,000 dwellings respectively. The IPA includes the borough of Ipswich and parts of the districts of Babergh, Mid-Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal. The parishes affected within Suffolk Coastal are Brightwell, Foxhall, Kesgrave (town), Little Bealings, Martlesham, Nacton, Playford, Purdis Farm and Rushmere St Andrew.
- 2.6.16 In addressing the overall, housing requirement, consideration needs to be given to the sources of supply. In this respect:
- (a) An attempt has been made to estimate the potential for development within the main urban areas, market towns and larger villages. This potential consists of such sites as vacant land, redundant employment sites, redevelopment, and intensification of existing sites ("infill"), etc. It is on the whole site specific and based on fieldwork carried out in 2004 as an "urban capacity study". A discount has been applied on the grounds that not all sites are likely to come forward. This discount is 10%. A desktop exercise was undertaken in early 2006 to update the study.

- (b) Within the smaller villages an attempt has also been made to estimate the occurrence of the intensification of existing sites - small developments such as infilling. This is not based on field survey but a projection of consents granted over the previous 5 years, discounted by two thirds on the basis that the supply is not infinite.
- (c) There are a significant number of outstanding planning permissions, some of which may be under construction. A large proportion is situated on the edge of Ipswich. Again a discount of 10% has been applied.
- (d) Windfall is the occurrence of development that cannot be predicted. Government advice is that an over-reliance must not be placed on windfall in meeting identified housing requirements. Other than in respect of infilling in (c) above it has, therefore, been excluded as a source of supply although its occurrence will be monitored;

2.6.17 The Council estimates that from the sources listed above provision can be identified for approximately two thirds of the total housing requirement. The remaining third will require positive provision in the Local Development Framework, through:

- (a) Brownfield allocations - sites to be identified in the LDF that occur on land that was previously developed. This could include current or vacant employment sites or caravan parks for example; and
- (b) Greenfield allocations - sites that were not previously developed. These could occur within urban areas (e.g. redundant playing fields, allotments or vacant overgrown plots) or outside such areas (such as farmland).

### **Alternative Options – Housing Numbers**

2.6.18 Option One. This option would see a possible reduction in housing numbers over the plan period. The argument for this would be:

- a) To seek to limit development on greenfield sites within the district.
- b) Alternatively, it could be part of a strategy put forward by the Council whereby the housing numbers identified in the RSS Panel Report for the Ipswich Policy Area are located in areas in and around Ipswich and not in Suffolk Coastal.

2.6.19 However, such an Option would:

- a) Not be consistent with the Regional Spatial Strategy
- b) Not provide a level of housing commensurate with the growth in job numbers within the Suffolk Coastal district area.
- c) Restrict the opportunities for affordable housing and not meet identified need.
- d) In the Ipswich context mean that new housing is not located on the eastern fringe where there is major employment (Martlesham Heath and Adastral Park), an excellent communications network and a range of services

2.6.20 Option Two. This option identifies sufficient provision to meet the overall requirement set out in the RSS and is in accordance with the split between the Ipswich Policy Area and the remainder of the district. To follow the strategy set out in the RSS would be to ensure the Core Strategy was in compliance with this plan and the overall development strategy for the area i.e. balancing housing and employment, maximising opportunities for public transport, access to services and facilities etc.

2.6.21 However, it might not enable the achievement of wider objectives relating to Felixstowe and the Trimleys as well as individual market towns

2.6.22 Option Three This option would provide for development levels over and above that set out in the RSS **by extending the plan period beyond 2021.**

- 2.6.23 Increasing provision over that set out in the RSS, but within certain specified limits, could bring additional benefits to the area. In particular, allowing for additional development over and above the limit set in the RSS for the Ipswich Policy Area, offers the opportunity to create a larger mixed use development encompassing a fuller range of social and community facilities, to complement that which currently exists at Grange Farm. Limiting development to the number of units that remains outstanding to comply with the RSS runs the risk of being too small to contribute significantly to existing provision, not making the best use of land and becoming, in effect, a dormitory area to Ipswich. Such an approach would not accord with the government's objective of creating sustainable communities.
- 2.6.24 Within the Felixstowe Peninsula, the numbers of units are not fixed through the RSS, but are for consideration through the Core Strategy. The spatial distribution of housing across the district is considered in the following section. With the general reduction in household size, additional new housing is required at these other settlements just to maintain provision for the existing population. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that at least some new housing provision is necessary in all settlements identified in the settlement hierarchy.
- 2.6.25 Allowing extra provision of development within the Felixstowe Peninsula would, however, start to address the issues identified through the David Lock study, whilst still allowing growth to occur at other settlements. The Council acknowledges the consultant's conclusions that without significant levels of growth, (i.e. their scenarios 3 and 4), the town will continue to experience a decline. Given the importance of the town for employment use linked to the Port (a strategic employment site), its potential for tourism, and the opportunity to reduce the levels of commuting, an approach that would allow for additional housing provision could be justified.
- 2.6.26 Allowing additional provision, would also introduce a measure of flexibility in meeting the RSS housing requirement. Given the unique range of settlements within the district, it would allow development to continue at the market towns and larger settlements even if development is delayed at other smaller settlements, thereby helping to maintain the average annual requirement.
- 2.6.27 However, Such an Option:
- a) Runs the risk of causing the LDF to be inconsistent with the RSS.
  - b) Means that additional provision is most likely to occur on greenfield land and the Council will need to ensure that this does not prejudice the development of brownfield sites first, particularly given that greenfield sites are generally considered easier to develop.

## **THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF NEW HOUSING**

- 2.6.28 Having determined the amount of new housing, the next stage in the process is to consider its broad spatial distribution – where will it be located? Such consideration is influenced by a number of factors including national policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Statement 3 on Housing, the Regional Spatial Strategy, an understanding of the settlement pattern and hierarchy, and the results of public consultation.

## **NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY**

- 2.6.29 National policy and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) give some guidance on the distribution of housing based on the principles of sustainable development and sustainable communities, namely:
- a) Car dependency should be reduced by locating housing closer to employment, education, health facilities, shops, leisure and local facilities
  - b) The majority of new development should be located in and adjacent to the main urban areas

- c) The role of market towns and large villages in providing employment and services to a rural hinterland should be sustained
- d) Careful examination of how a settlement or group of settlements functions is required
- e) The quality and character of the rural areas should be protected

The role of the Core Strategy is to translate these principles to the local level. It does this through the settlement hierarchy, which identifies a range of settlement types throughout the district. In addition, the Council is committed to addressing the acknowledged decline currently being experienced in Felixstowe. With the recent acquisition of “Growth Point Status” for the Haven Gateway area, which in Suffolk Coastal includes much of the district, the emphasis will be on creating the infrastructure required to support the levels of growth proposed in the RSS. There is also the likelihood that housing requirements will be increased in the longer term.

### **OPTIONS FOR HOUSING DISTRIBUTION**

2.6.30 As noted in paragraph 2.6.16 approximately two thirds of the district-wide requirement of 10,200 new dwellings between 2001 and 2021 can be accounted for in terms of the following sources of supply – completions, current planning permissions, brownfield opportunities. The net requirement is 3620 new dwellings requiring positive provision in the DPD.

2.6.31 Having, therefore, determined the amount of new housing that has to be provided and set the principles to determine where it should be located, this section of the Report considers its spatial distribution.

2.6.32 In considering the Options the following are important:

- (a) The RSS distinguishes between that part of the district of Suffolk Coastal that falls within the “Ipswich Policy Area” and that which falls outside of it. The Ipswich Policy Area contains the parishes of Brightwell, Foxhall, Little Bealings, Martlesham, Nacton, Playford, Purdis Farm and Rushmere St Andrew as well as the town of Kesgrave
- (b) The Panel that examined the RSS was quite clear in terms of identifying a specific number of houses to be located within the Ipswich Policy Area;
- (c) Felixstowe is acknowledged to be a major employment centre and should be considered as a potential location for a significant proportion of the housing requirements in order to balance housing and jobs. This was recognised by the Panel that considered the RSS.
- (d) The market towns within the Suffolk Coastal district – Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Leiston, Saxmundham and Woodbridge – perform important functions and, subject to the ability to identify suitable sites, would benefit from additional modest allocations of new housing in order to support local services and redress population imbalances. At Leiston, the need to have regard to the nuclear safeguarding zone associated with the power station complex at Sizewell will also have to be taken into account.
- (e) The larger villages might enjoy similar benefits
- (f) There is a need for affordable housing across the district
- (g) Feedback from public consultation suggested that development should be spread across the district but that the largest concentrations should be at the larger urban centres.

2.6.33 In respect of (c) above, the Council gives considerable weight to the findings of the Felixstowe Study by David Lock Associates, as referred to previously

### **Alternative Options**

2.6.34 When considering the possible range of options for distributing houses the Option of a new settlement (i.e. create a new community by putting all the new houses in one location) is not considered. This is because such an Option would be contrary to the

Regional Spatial Strategy and, the amount of housing proposed for the district is unlikely to make it sustainable.

2.6.35 Six potential Options have however been identified for the spatial distribution of housing across the district as a whole. These are summarised in Appendix 4, together with their positive and negative benefits. In short these are:

Option One - to exceed the identified requirement for the Ipswich Policy Area and locate all of the net housing requirement of 3620 there;

Option Two - to respect the RSS Panel recommendations in respect of the Ipswich Policy Area by allocating the minimum necessary in order to meet the requirement of 3200, and then locate all of the remaining net requirement in Felixstowe and the Trimleys;

Option Three - to share equally the net housing requirement between the Ipswich Policy Area and Felixstowe/Trimleys;

Option Four - to share the net housing requirement between the Ipswich Policy Area, Felixstowe/Trimleys and the market towns;

Option Five - to share the net housing requirement between the Ipswich Policy Area, Felixstowe/Trimleys, the market towns and the larger villages; and

Option Six – if the Option of exceeding the RSS housing requirements is pursued, to build on the approach set out in Option Five, but extend it to exceed the RSS requirements in order that the future planning of the Ipswich Policy Area and Felixstowe/Trimleys can take place without being constrained by ceilings on housing numbers. This additional development is likely to take place beyond the current plan period

2.6.36 In terms of the **market towns** the potential number of dwellings under Options 4, 5 and 6 is presented as a cumulative total. This is because at this stage of the Plan development process, precision in respect of each town is not possible. However, for each town a range of additional housing is being put forward. This is in addition to sites that have planning permission, potential sites identified within the urban area and unpredicted windfall. The range has been established on the basis of:

- The nature of the individual town, most notably the sensitivity of its setting bearing in mind that the range of new housing is most likely to be located on greenfield sites
- Major constraints such as roads, rivers and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.6.37 The range should be considered to represent Options, from the lowest to the highest number. The ranges are:

Market Town	Outstanding planning permissions (2004)	Urban Capacity Sites (2004)	Range* Potential Allocations	Comments
Aldeburgh	108	42	0 - 50	Entirely within the AONB with sensitive boundaries
Framlingham	155	81	150 - 300	Reasonably self-contained with employment facilities and a range of services

Leiston	96	237	0 - 150	Sizewell safeguarding restrictions may restrict development to the lower end of the range
Saxmundham	230	153	150 - 300	Reasonably self-contained with employment facilities and a range of services
Woodbridge	70	183	0 - 100	Strongly constrained, notably by the A12.

Footnote: This is in addition to sites that have planning permission, potential sites identified within the urban area and unpredicted windfall.

2.6.38 In respect of large villages, or 'key service centres' if that particular settlement designation is pursued, the Options of those that will be appropriate for development are numerous given the number of settlements involved. Therefore, a decision as to whether a particular settlement can accommodate development will be taken on the basis of:

- a) The local need for housing;
- b) The views and aspirations of the local community;
- c) The amount and type of facilities available; and
- d) The nature of the individual settlement, most notably the sensitivity of its setting bearing in mind that the new housing is most likely to be located on greenfield sites

### LOOKING FOR SUITABLE SITES

2.6.39 The actual sites that are allocated to meet the requirements and conform to the spatial distribution will be the subject of separate consultation and set out in a separate Local Development Document. In broad terms, these choices will be identified in a structured way having regard to the principles of sustainable development and sustainable communities:

- a) Priority should be given to previously developed (brownfield) land in preference to greenfield land
- b) Where development has to take place outside urban areas the most sustainable option should be considered
- c) There should be a systematic approach to assessing the development potential of sites

### General Locations

2.6.40 In respect of the Ipswich Fringe, Felixstowe and the Trimleys, and, to a lesser extent, the market towns there are **three basic Options when it comes to deciding the strategic location** for development.

2.6.41 Option One is to locate the housing in a specific area on one large site. This offers benefits of:

- a) The creation of a range of social and community facilities
- b) The long term opportunity to create a larger mixed use development
- c) Strategic thinking in respect of infrastructure provision

2.6.42 The dis-benefits of such an approach relate to:

- a) The potential increased impact on the environment and on infrastructure such as roads
- b) The lack of flexibility and choice

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2.6.43 Option Two is to locate the housing in two, or if the numbers and size of settlement permit it, three areas possibly located apart from each other. The benefits of such an approach include:

- c) the opportunity, albeit less so for a smaller the site, to create mixed use development encompassing a range of social and community facilities
- d) spreading of the impact
- e) increased choice

2.6.44 The dis-benefits include:

- a) Runs the risk of the developments being too small to support new services and becoming, in effect, dormitory estates. Such an approach would not accord with the government's objective of creating sustainable communities

2.6.45 Option Three is to "pepper-pot" development on a number of small sites spread over a number of areas. This has the benefits of:

- a) Reducing environmental impact
- b) Creating flexibility and choice

2.6.46 The dis-benefits are, amongst other things:

- a) A distinct lack of strategic forward planning
- b) The creation of small extensions to urban areas, all lacking cohesion

### **Specific Site Selection**

2.6.47 The actual sites that are allocated to meet the requirements and conform to the spatial distribution will be the subject of separate consultation and set out in a separate Local Development Document. Options will be identified. In broad terms, these choices will be identified in a structured way having regard to the principles of sustainable development and sustainable communities:

- a) Priority should be given to previously developed (brownfield) land in preference to greenfield land
- b) Where development has to take place outside urban areas the most sustainable option should be considered
- c) There should be a systematic approach to assessing the development potential of sites

2.6.48 The criteria to be used in the identification of sites will include:

- a) Compliance with the RSS
- b) Proximity to areas of employment
- c) Proximity to community infrastructure, notably schools
- d) Public transport to town centres
- e) Landscape issues
- f) Impact on areas of wildlife importance
- g) Impact on the identity of individual settlements
- h) The local need for affordable housing
- i) Strategic flood risk
- j) Potential impact on commuting patterns

## SUMMARY OF THE HOUSING OPTIONS

<b>AMOUNT OF HOUSING REQUIRED</b>																	
Option 1	Less than the RSS requirement of 10,200 new houses in the district in the period 2001 to 2021																
Option 2	The RSS requirement of 10,200 in the district in the period 2001 to 2021																
Option 3	More than the requirement of 10,200 new houses, extending the period beyond 2021																
<b>HOUSING DISTRIBUTION</b>																	
All Options	Most housing will be created through existing planning permissions, sites in urban areas and windfall																
Option 1	<p>The balance will be allocated on the fringes of Ipswich</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Ipswich Fringe</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3620</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Felixstowe/Trimleys</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aldeburgh</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Framlingham</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leiston</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saxmundham</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Woodbridge</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Service Centres</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> </table>	Ipswich Fringe	3620	Felixstowe/Trimleys	0	Aldeburgh	0	Framlingham	0	Leiston	0	Saxmundham	0	Woodbridge	0	Key Service Centres	0
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Option 2	<p>The balance will be allocated at Felixstowe/Trimleys plus some on the fringes of Ipswich sufficient to satisfy the RSS</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Ipswich Fringe</td> <td style="text-align: right;">900</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Felixstowe/Trimleys</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2720</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aldeburgh</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Framlingham</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leiston</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saxmundham</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Woodbridge</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Service Centres</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0</td> </tr> </table>	Ipswich Fringe	900	Felixstowe/Trimleys	2720	Aldeburgh	0	Framlingham	0	Leiston	0	Saxmundham	0	Woodbridge	0	Key Service Centres	0
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<p><b>SUGGESTED CRITERIA TO BE USED TO DETERMINE WHICH LARGE VILLAGES/KEY SERVICE CENTRES WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF AN ALLOCATION</b></p>																																	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The local need for housing;</li> <li>2. The views and aspirations of the local community;</li> <li>3. The amount and type of facilities available; and</li> <li>4. The nature of the individual settlement, most notably the sensitivity of its setting bearing in mind that the new housing is most likely to be located on greenfield sites</li> </ol>																																	
<p><b>POTENTIAL OPTIONS IN RESPECT OF HOW HOUSING COULD BE DISTRIBUTED IN THE IPSWICH POLICY AREA ; FELIXSTOWE/TRIMLEYS &amp; THE MARKET TOWNS?</b></p>																																	
Option 1	One large allocation																																
Option 2	A small number of medium sized sites																																
Option 3	A variety of sites of different sizes and types																																

## SUGGESTED CRITERIA TO BE USED TO LOCATE A SPECIFIC ALLOCATIONS

1. Compliance with the RSS
2. Proximity to areas of employment
3. Proximity to community infrastructure, notably schools
4. Public transport to town centres
5. Landscape issues
6. Impact on areas of wildlife importance
7. Impact on the identity of individual settlements
8. The local need for affordable housing
9. Strategic flood risk
10. Potential impact on commuting patterns

### QUESTIONS – Housing Numbers

- Q12 Which of the three options listed do you prefer and why?  
Option 1  
Option 2  
Option 3

### Housing Distribution

- Q13 Which of the six options listed do you most agree with? Please rank the options in order of preference (A-F). "A" is the most favoured. "F" is the least favoured.  
**Option 1**  
**Option 2**  
**Option 3**  
**Option 4**  
**Option 5**  
**Option 6**

Please give reasons for your preferred choice.....

- Q14 Are there any alternative options to the six listed which are both practical and realistic, that you think the Council should be considering? Y/N  
If YES what are they?.
- Q15 Do you consider the suggested range of housing numbers set out for each of the market towns to be broadly correct? YES/NO  
If NO, why not?

### Suitable Sites (general locations & site specific criteria)

- Q16 Which option do you consider the most appropriate for:
- (i) Ipswich Policy Area
  - (ii) Felixstowe & the Trimleys
  - (iii) The market towns
- Q17 With reference to the site specific criteria for the identification of housing sites (paragraphs 2.6.47 – 2.6.48) are there any additional criteria you would wish to see included?

## **FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY**

- 2.6.49 Government guidance requires that Local Planning Authorities through their local plans can maintain a 5-year supply of land. There is therefore no option other than to ensure such provision. Based on recent rates of construction however, the Council is satisfied that the options set out above offer sufficient flexibility, to comply with government guidance. This is because a high proportion of the initial five-year tranche comprises outstanding planning permissions, much of which consists of large estates under construction.
- 2.6.50 However, it is expected that such developments will be built out after 5 years and will need to be replaced by some of the allocations unless the sources of land in urban locations continues to supply the house-building industry. This will need to be monitored. It is expected that in practice, new development will be provided on a mix of brownfield and greenfield sites. The housing trajectory shown in Appendix 7 gives an indication of how this may be achieved.

## **MEETING HOUSING DEMAND (SIZE, TYPE AND TENURE OF DWELLINGS)**

### **Draft Objective 5 Meeting Housing Demand**

**To increase the stock of housing to provide for the full range of size type and tenure of dwellings to meet the demands of the existing and future population by maximising the use of the existing stock through conversion, adaptation or extension and targeting new provision to meet identified shortfalls and longer term needs.**

## **HOUSING DEMAND - AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

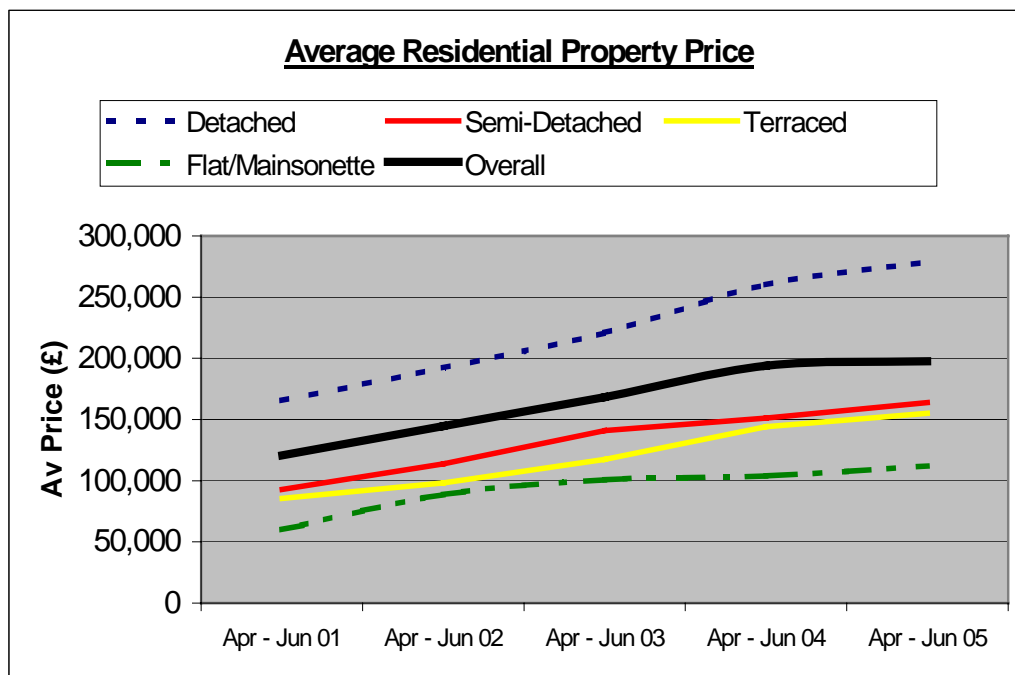
- 2.6.51 House prices within the district since 2001 have shown an average rise of 64% (see Table 4). The implications are that if income levels do not match similar increases, the level of exclusion due to housing affordability will be extended. This issue is common across much of the country. In Suffolk Coastal, the average income in April 2005 was £29,285 compared with £30,640 regionally and £28,210 nationally. Notwithstanding this high annual average wage, there are considerable disparities in earnings within the district, with much of the population in the northern more rural sector reliant on low wages linked to the prevalence of the agricultural industry, tourism and hospitality and social care.
- 2.6.52 Table 3 below indicates the housing affordability ratio across the district. It can be seen that the ratio between house prices and incomes is increasing year on year. In 2005, the average property price in the district was just over 7 times greater than people's average yearly earning, despite the gradual increase of the latter.

**Table 3 Ratio Between Average House Price and Average Income**

<b>Apr – Jun 02</b>	<b>Apr – Jun 03</b>	<b>Apr – Jun 04</b>	<b>Apr – Jun 05</b>
5.71	6.35	7.26	7.33

Source: Suffolk Observatory

Table 3 Average Residential Property Price



Source : Land Registry

2.6.53 The District Council also commissioned a Housing Needs Study, completed in July 2006. The key points to emerge from this study are:

- a) Household affordability depends on the relationship between the cost of appropriate local housing and the amount that the household is able to afford;
- b) The housing model used identifies an overall net requirement in the next 5 years for 2,335 additional dwellings (this equates reasonably well with the expectation of 2550 dwellings over the same period in order to meet the requirements set in the Regional Spatial Strategy);
- c) The net requirement is attributable to a net gain of 2,500 households through migration coupled with an indigenous decline of 200 households (as fewer households form than dissolve);
- d) The balance of housing requirements is for 19% social housing, 5% intermediate (i.e. 24% affordable housing) and 76% general market housing. This balance is determined on the basis of affordability, assuming that the relationship between house prices and income remains constant.

2.6.54 The definition of affordable housing used in the study, and to be used in the Core Strategy, is:

*“Affordable housing is housing of an adequate standard that is cheaper than the housing generally available in the local housing market. It comprises:*

- *Social housing, which is provided to rent (or on a shared ownership basis) by local authorities or registered social landlords at below market cost for households in need; and*
- *Intermediate housing, which is housing that is below market rents but above social rent scales. It can include key worker schemes or low cost ownership (but not in this*

*case because of the problems of maintaining the low cost in perpetuity). A key worker is someone whose services are essential to the development and sustainability of the local community, e.g. a teacher or doctor)."*

2.6.55 Based on the proportions arising from the survey, the following targets will be set for affordable housing in the next 5 years (figures have been rounded):

- 440 social units (19% of 2335)
- 120 intermediate units (5% of 2335)

### **Available Options**

2.6.56 Providing housing to meet the needs of the local population including affordable housing is part of the government's priority of a "decent home for all". The government also requires Local Authorities to undertake Housing Needs Surveys to ensure that they are provided with up-to-date information on need within their local area. There is therefore no option in relation to whether or not the issue of affordable housing is provided for through the Core Strategy. The issue (and options) is how best to address this issue to maximise the opportunities to meet the level of housing need identified in the Housing Needs Survey.

2.6.57 When considering the alternative options for achieving the affordable housing target, the following factors have been taken into account.

2.6.58 Meeting (or exceeding) the housing requirements set out in the RSS will achieve a substantial amount of affordable housing if a proportion of the total has to be such. However, not all development will be able to provide affordable housing on account of the facts that many developments already have planning permission (and exclude affordable housing), and a significant number of new developments will consist of one or two dwellings only.

2.6.59 The more significant strategic allocations will potentially be located in the south of the district around the major centres of Felixstowe and the Ipswich Policy Area. Although other more modest allocations may well be made in the market towns, choice and location of affordable housing is limited. The needs of more rural communities, particularly in the north of the district, are not being addressed.

### **Alternative Options**

2.6.60 Option One - To continue with the policy in the adopted Local Plan 2<sup>nd</sup> Alterations. This new policy was only adopted in March 2006 and as yet has not been in operation long enough to determine how successful it has and is likely to be. This new policy has reduced the thresholds at which affordable provision will be sought in order to address the increasing problem of affordability within the District. The policy distinguishes between towns and villages with a requirement for a 1 in 3 affordable provision for developments of 6 or more; and 3 or more units respectively. It also permits 100% affordable housing on exception sites on the edges of market towns or villages.

2.6.61 Option Two – This option represents a refinement of Option One. It addresses, more specifically, the needs of the rural areas and the difficulties that have been experienced in bringing "exception sites" to fruition. Under this option, where rural sites on the edges of villages are specifically identified to meet the more local rather than the strategic housing requirements the affordable requirement would increase to 2 in 3 of the units provided. Early feedback suggests that site owners are more likely to bring sites forward where there is a prospect of one in three units being sold on the open market. The final refinement would limit individual developments to a maximum of 12 units reflecting the need for schemes to be modest in number and well related in scale to the size and scale of the settlement.

2.6.62 For both Options One and Option Two, the proportions of social and intermediate housing required for individual schemes will depend upon local need as evidenced in the Housing Needs Survey or local parish survey. Where possible (i.e. subject to changing legislation in

relation to right to buy) such units would be expected to remain as affordable housing, for local needs in perpetuity.

2.6.63 Option Three – Under this Option, the proportion of affordable housing required from new development would reduce to 24%, the proportion recommended in the latest 2006 Housing Needs Survey: There are a number of disadvantages with this blanket approach as follows:

- a) The proportion of 24% relates to the total number of dwellings that will come forward in the next 5 years. A large element of these will be on small sites of one or two dwellings where an element of affordable housing is impractical. Therefore, the proportion should be higher than 24%. The current figure of 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>% appears a reasonable one. Based purely on past trends this is expected to yield 450 of the total requirement of 560 affordable units in the next 5 years. There is, therefore, no justification to increase it to, say 40%.
- b) The thresholds are already very low. A threshold of two units in villages would require a proportion of 50% in order to be workable.
- c) The currently adopted policy is expected to be a successful means of achieving affordable homes in rural communities, particularly with the threshold at such a low level in villages.

2.6.64 A summary of how each of the three Options will achieve affordable housing is set out below.

OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proportion of the housing allocations made at Major Centres and Market Towns, as identified on the Proposals Map. That proportion will be 1 in 3 affordable units</li> <li>• Exception sites at Market Towns and Villages where 100% of the units are affordable units. Such sites should not normally exceed 12 units in total.</li> <li>• On other sites which may come forward for development during the plan period, and which conform to planning policy, a proportion of 1 in 3 affordable units will be required. The</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proportion of the housing allocations made at Major Centres and Market Towns, as identified on the Proposals Map. That proportion will be 1 in 3 affordable units</li> <li>• A proportion of modest allocations at Large Villages/Key Service Centres to meet the local needs of rural communities, as identified on the Proposals Map. That proportion is to be 2 in 3 affordable units (“2 + 1”).</li> <li>• Exception sites at Market Towns and Villages where 100% of the units are affordable units. Such sites should not normally exceed 12 units in total.</li> <li>• On other sites which may come forward for development during the plan period, and which conform to planning policy, a proportion of 1 in 3 affordable units will be required. The thresholds before this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proportion of the housing allocations made at Major Centres and Market Towns, as identified on the Proposals Map. That proportion will be 24% affordable units</li> <li>• Exception sites at Market Towns and Villages where 100% of the units are affordable units. Such sites should not normally exceed 12 units in total.</li> <li>• On other sites which may come forward for development during the plan period, and which conform to planning policy, a proportion of 24%</li> </ul>

<p>thresholds before this requirement comes into effect are 3 or more units in Villages, and 6 or more units in Major Centres and Market Towns</p>	<p>requirement comes into effect are 3 or more units in Villages, and 6 or more units in Major Centres and Market Towns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing in non-sustainable settlements will only be permissible where it is required to meet a proven local need</li> </ul>	<p>affordable units will be required. The thresholds before this requirement comes into effect will need to be reduced from the current 3 or more units in Villages, and 6 or more units in Major Centres and Market Towns</p>
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#### QUESTION - Affordable Housing

- Q18 Which and why of the options listed do you consider would best meet the affordable housing needs of the district ?
- Option 1
  - Option 2
  - Option 3.

### **GYPSES/TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOWMEN**

- 2.6.65 Gypsies/Travellers and Travelling Showmen have specific housing requirements that the Council is required by government to address. As with affordable housing provision, it is essential that this requirement be based on robust evidence of need. The best current quantitative information currently available on the Gypsy and Traveller communities is a bi-annual survey of caravans, carried out by the Council. No count has been carried out for the Traveller community. The Council has no authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites and hence in the last three years only one caravan has been recorded on each of three unauthorised sites. It is recognised therefore that this information is wholly inadequate, and does not reflect the numbers of Travellers in particular, known to use the district. Further detailed information is required.
- 2.6.66 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has been commissioned jointly with the neighbouring authorities of Ipswich Borough, Mid-Suffolk, Babergh and Waveney District Councils', given the nature of the gypsy, traveller and travelling showpersons' lifestyle. This survey will provide each of the participating Councils with details of the number and type of sites required within their area. The information will not be available until February 2007. Further assessment work is being carried out to support the RSS. With regard to possible options, it is not realistic to look at identifying sites within the Core Strategy or the Site Specific Strategy given the current timetable. The only option is to include a criterion-based policy that accords with latest government guidance within the Core Strategy. Such a policy will provide the basis on which any applications for sites may come forward in advance of the GTAA work reporting and being implemented.

### **RETENTION OF SMALL DWELLINGS**

- 2.6.67 The provision and retention of small units of accommodation has been identified as an important element in achieving the Council's Vision for the district. They are units that meet the needs both of smaller households just starting out and that of parts of the older section of the population looking to downsize. This need is reflected across both the urban and rural areas. There is some concern that where the two groups are competing within the same

locality for a limited supply of small units, that the older people (resident or in-migrating) will win out as they are potentially better off. This in turn can force prices beyond the scope of the younger, economically active residents the Council is trying to retain.

- 2.6.68 The loss of such units also has implications in terms of looking to secure balanced communities that provide for the full range of size and type of unit within a locality. In relation to new estates for example, the mix of dwellings is established at the planning application stage having regard to what is about in the locality. Once built, it is not uncommon for small units to be extended and bedrooms added.
- 2.6.69 Given the price of properties, it is often cheaper for example to extend an existing 2-bed property than to move and buy an equivalent 3-bed property. It could be argued that this negates the arguments put forward at the planning application stage for the final mix to be agreed.

### **Alternative Options**

- 2.6.70 There are a number of alternative options that the Council could pursue to address this issue.
- 2.6.71 Option One – Do nothing. Let the system continue as existing. This is perhaps the easiest option to pursue, but runs the risk of not achieving the Council’s Vision for sustainable communities or working to actively encourage younger people to remain within the District. Under this option, smaller built units would continue to be lost but new provision would continue to be provided as new applications are submitted. In those settlements where new provision is likely to be limited this poses a greater potential problem.
- 2.6.72 Option Two – Under this option, conditions would be placed on all new developments of one and two bedroom dwellings which would prevent them being extended in such a way as to create an additional bedroom(s). It would not prevent conservatories or similar type extensions being added. Limiting development in this way would need to be done by way of a condition at the planning application stage. Whilst this would no doubt be challenged at appeal, it is difficult to see how the Council could proactively pursue its stated intention if such an approach is not adopted. How successful the policy was would be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 2.6.73 Option Three – This third option would be to apply the policy of retaining smaller dwellings retrospectively. This would mean not allowing any extensions on all small property. This runs the danger of not being workable in practice either in terms of its implementation or in terms of “fairness” to those who had bought properties in anticipation of extending them at a later date.

#### **QUESTIONS - Small Dwellings**

- Q19 Do you think there is a particular need to retain small dwellings (1 or 2 bedrooms)? YES/NO
- Q20 If YES which of the options listed do you consider offers the best approach and why?  
Option 1....  
Option 2  
Option 3

### **Replacement and Extension of Dwellings in the Countryside**

- 2.6.74 The impact of extensions and replacements in the countryside can be considerably more than in a built up area both in terms of the natural and physical environment and the local social and economic structure. This is essentially because there are fewer properties located within the rural areas.

- 2.6.75 There are a number of concerns and questions that have been raised regarding the implementation and reasoning behind the current policy, including
- Impact of development on the built and natural environment;
  - The desire or otherwise to retain a range of dwelling size and type within the rural areas to meet existing and future needs; and
  - Whether permitting the extension of small dwellings takes them out of the price range of local people and more likely to be used as second homes.
- 2.6.76 First and foremost, it is essential to be clear about what the policy is seeking to achieve. With regard to impact on the environment, issues such as visual impact, massing etc will be important. The Option to be considered is whether or not within those areas designated for their landscape interest, particularly the AONB, replacements and extensions should be more tightly restricted than elsewhere within the countryside? Or, is it appropriate to continue to deal with applications on their merits under a more general criteria included within a design policy(s)? A solution may include withdrawing permitted development rights on replacement dwellings; or placing a limit on existing dwellings restricting the size of an extension, for example so as not to exceed what would be acceptable under permitted development rights.
- 2.6.77 The second question relates to the social and economic structure of the area. If development is to be restricted within the countryside, should the Council be seeking to place a further restriction on existing dwellings within this area? The reason for restricting extensions would be to look to retain a range of size and type of dwellings within these smaller settlements, in an attempt to enable balanced communities to exist. Extensions in this regard would be those which result in the creation of an additional bedroom(s). Conversely, it could be argued that to restrict people's ability to extend their property in an area where new development is limited and opportunities to move within the locality are few and far between, that the policy would result in existing communities being broken up, contrary to its stated intention. Any such approach would in any case need to be supported by evidence provided through the Housing Needs Survey and a local housing market assessment.
- 2.6.78 It should also be noted that to adopt an approach that seeks to limit the extension of existing dwellings in the countryside, would be inconsistent with that put forward for consideration within the urban areas. In the urban areas it is suggested that new one and two bedroom units would be subject to a condition attached to the planning permission which would restrict their extension where this would create an additional bedroom space. The "fairness" of such an approach will be an issue. The argument for a split approach would have to be on the basis of the differing circumstances between these two types of area and the issues they raise.
- 2.6.79 If however the reasoning behind the policy is to look to find a way to ensure that what dwellings exist remain available for the benefit of the local population (i.e. locally affordable) as opposed to second homes, this is a different issue. An alternative approach which aims to restrict extensions or re-builds to those dwellings which are occupied as a sole or main residence may offer a way forward. Such an approach would need to be monitored.

### **THE ISSUE OF SECOND HOMES**

- 2.6.80 The presence of second homes has been raised as an issue, particularly within the more rural areas. Concerns have been expressed that second homeowners take dwellings out of the reach of the local community both in terms of price and access where the availability of accommodation is limited. The percentage of second homes across the district is 4.39%. However, some settlements experience a very high level of second home ownership such as Walberswick and Dunwich at 30%. This can impact on the character of the settlement.

### **Alternative Options**

- 2.6.81 Under normal circumstances, the Council is not in a position to be able to stop people buying properties as second homes. The Council could consider restricting the occupancy of dwellings in a particular area to local people. Such a policy approach is exceptional even at

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the national level. At this time there is insufficient evidence, most noticeably from the Housing Needs Survey, to suggest that such radical policies are required, particularly given the implications for human rights. However, the issues will be monitored and, if necessary, addressed in a subsequent review.

- 2.6.82 There is also a debate to be had in the role that second homes potentially play as tourist accommodation this is set out under the tourism section.

**QUESTION - Second Homes**

Q21 Do you consider the presence of second homes to be a problem in your area?  
YES/NO

If YES, which area, and why?



# THE CORE STRATEGY & OPTIONS

## THE ECONOMY

### Theme 3 - Strengthening The Economy

To stimulate a prosperous economy in order to improve the quality of life for the community.

## 2.7 THE ECONOMY

### HEADLINE FACTS – THE ECONOMY

- RSS indication is for 8000 new jobs to be provided in the period 2001-2021.
- A further 13,600 employees are likely to have to be replaced during the period 2001-2021
- Major increases in employees during the period to 2021 are most likely to occur in transport and communications and business service activities, with limited increases in health, education and retail and other services (Business service activities include real estate, computer activities, accounting, advertising etc. Other services includes social enterprise, creative and cultural and tourism, heritage and leisure) Manufacturing and agriculture and expected to continue to decline.
- There is currently a net commuting pattern out of the area
- The economic activity rate of Suffolk Coastal overall is 73.6%, this being higher in the south of the district. It is the lowest in Suffolk (average 81%).
- Unemployment levels are below that for the rest of Suffolk and the national and regional averages
- The district has the most qualified workforce within Suffolk – only 26% have no formal qualifications.
- The district suffers from the loss of young adults leaving the area.
- Despite the high qualification proportion, many jobs in the north of the district are low skilled, low paid or seasonal linked to agriculture.
- Agriculture is a major component on the economy (4.9%) with employment in this sector 5 x the national average. It has an important role to play in land management and as a continuing source of employment in the rural areas. It also has a significant role in terms of self-employment opportunities.
- There are over 4,500 businesses that trade in the district, almost all employing less than 50 and a significant number less than 5.
- Of the large employers the Port of Felixstowe is a major UK container hub, with warehousing and distribution particularly significant around it. The Port has approval for a considerable expansion/reconfiguration
- 45% of the Felixstowe workforce are either directly or indirectly related to the Port.
- 48% of people working in Felixstowe commute from elsewhere.
- The adjacent regional town of Ipswich exerts considerable influence on the labour and housing markets.
- There are two high-tech business clusters of different scales at Martlesham Heath and Framlingham.
- At Martlesham Heath BT Exact operates as an IT research and development centre employing more than 3,000 engineers and scientists.
- The A12 and A14 play an important role in the economy of the district
- The decommissioning of Sizewell 'A' will result in the loss of 525 direct and 105 indirect jobs in the next 5 years
- The overall value of tourism to Suffolk Coastal is estimated at £140 million.
- Tourism supports an estimated 2,800 full-time jobs plus approximately 1,200 seasonal and part-time jobs.
- Culture and heritage play major roles in the economy, most notably Snape Maltings with its concert hall and music school, as well as Sutton Hoo, which attracted 180,000 visitors in the year after opening a new Visitor Centre.
- The popularity of some visitor destinations has resulted in significant adverse impacts on host communities and the environment.
- There are 6 town centres - Aldeburgh, Felixstowe, Framlingham, Leiston, Saxmundham and Woodbridge.

The **Community Strategy** identifies as **PRIORITY AREAS**:

- To maintain and enhance the prosperity of our rural areas and promote opportunities for people to deliver the skills they need, by furthering small business growth, developing the workforce and fostering market towns as service employment centres
- Working with young people to meet their needs and help them remain in the district, enabling them to achieve economic wellbeing

The **Community Strategy** also identifies as **KEY ISSUES**:

- to develop tourism, maritime and high technology industries
- tackling regeneration in priority areas such as Felixstowe.

***You have told us the issues are:***

- Lack of accessibility to jobs, both in terms of the quality of the transport system but also the number and location of the jobs themselves
- Lack of diversity in terms of employment opportunities.
- Investment in the economy, notably in high-tech activity
- The need for further research on the local economy, particularly if it is to be used to determine the choice of new employment sites
- The pressure to develop existing employment sites for other uses, notably residential development
- Tourism is good for the economy but the environment and local communities are sensitive to visitor pressure.
- Young people leaving rural areas due to a lack of suitable jobs
- The economic impact of the decommissioning of Sizewell A
- The need for additional flexibility in respect of new policies to cover the conversion of rural buildings, particularly when close to sustainable communities
- The A12 north of Wickham Market needs to be upgraded due to the increased daily and holiday traffic
- Sustainable balance should not become subservient to economic prosperity
- Support for the development of small scale business units
- Concern that pig farms can become industrial units

## **THE SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PROPERTY**

### **Draft Objective 6 - Economic Development**

**To increase prosperity and employment growth to meet, as a minimum, the identified employment needs of the district as indicated in the RSS, to achieve a more sustainable balance between workers and jobs and to attract workers to remain in employment within the district.**

- 2.7.1 Achieving a strong and diverse economy, which provides a more sustainable balance between workers and jobs is a key objective of the Plan. It is a fundamental element in achieving the Council's Vision for the area insofar as it relates to re-balancing the population structure by providing an incentive particularly for those aged 18-30 to stay locally, or to be attracted into the district.
- 2.7.2 Whilst average wage levels for the district in 2005 were above average for the UK, they remain lower than the regional average and there remain wide variations within the individual employment sectors and therefore geographic areas. At Felixstowe employment is centred on the port. At Martlesham Heath, BT's research and development HQ is a major employer. Across the more rural parts of the district, agriculture and associated trades are dominant.

Public sector employment is also important, with a larger concentration in the southern rather than northern part of the district and at the larger centres. This has implications for the spatial strategy.

- 2.7.3 Two studies have been commissioned to assess the extent of existing employment provision, the workforce, and potential changes within the economic structure currently operating within the district. The first study completed in December 2005 took a strategic overview of employment in the Haven Gateway sub-region of which the southern part of the district forms a part. A further study was commissioned by the District Council and completed in August 2006. This considered more specifically the economy of the Suffolk Coastal district in order to inform the development of employment policies. The studies confirm that there are structural changes occurring within the local economy. Contractions are occurring within the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. With agriculture being so important to the rural areas and dominant in the northern part of the area, opportunities for diversification will be important.
- 2.7.4 Sectors where the employment increase is felt most strongly are business services such as banking and finance, as well as transport and communications, education and health. These uses are most likely to be found or supported at the main urban areas and market towns.
- 2.7.5 This sectoral growth shifts the occupation structure towards more highly skilled occupation types, including professionals and associate professionals. Whilst the district enjoys very high levels of skilled worker, there is currently a pattern of out-commuting for jobs that have higher wages. The forecast infers that more highly skilled workers from the area may be employed closer to home, and improve the balance of workers versus older people.
- 2.7.6 The proposed Ipswich based University College Suffolk will go some way towards providing more education opportunities locally and is supported by this Council, including the provision of satellite facilities.
- 2.7.7 The requirements of the RSS and the findings of the two supporting studies raise a number of issues which the Core Strategy will need to address with regard to new employment provision and how it will be provided so as to best meet the Council's Vision for the district.

### **NEW EMPLOYMENT PROVISION**

- 2.7.8 .8 The Regional Spatial Strategy identifies a need for additional jobs within the Haven Gateway sub-region. It is estimated that the Suffolk Coastal area could accommodate 8000 of the total requirement for the Haven Gateway sub-region. Such jobs will not only provide for the expanding population of Suffolk Coastal (expected to increase by 10,200 units over the same period) but also that of Ipswich.
- 2.7.9 The Council will seek to ensure that there is a continuous supply of employment land in order to:
- a) Achieve the Core Strategy objectives;
  - b) Create the jobs required by the Regional Spatial Strategy; and
  - c) Provide a choice of sites in terms of size, location and quality
- 2.7.10 The distribution of this land will reflect the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy, ensuring that employment opportunities are in places:
- a) Consistent with the RSS;
  - b) Consistent with the settlement hierarchy in the Core Strategy;
  - c) That are sustainable; and
  - d) That support regeneration

2.7.11 Changes in working arrangements are likely to be influential, most noticeably in respect of small businesses, as working from home becomes more prevalent. However, there are two principal means of achieving new employment:

- a) The identification of new areas for employment uses; and
- b) The protection of existing sites.

2.7.12 Each is examined in the following sections.

## **NEW EMPLOYMENT AREAS**

### **Strategic Employment Sites**

2.7.13 This strategic employment study confirmed that within the Suffolk Coastal District Council area, sufficient land is already identified in the adopted Local Plan to contribute 8000 new jobs to meet the RSS requirement for the Haven Gateway sub-region to the period to 2021. The vast majority of that land is of medium or good quality. Sites that are most likely to meet future demand include the following proposals in the current Local Plan:

- Proposed extension to Ransomes Europark at Nacton (14 ha),
- The Suffolk Innovation Park adjacent to Adastral Park at Martlesham (18 ha), and
- Land at or adjacent to the Port of Felixstowe.

2.7.14 Ransomes Europark lies within Ipswich and an extension to it into the district of Suffolk Coastal remains a valid and sustainable proposal, lying close to Ipswich and on the A14 trunk road. The Option of identifying this as a strategic employment site is not considered relevant. The extension, however, is of sub-regional significance providing as it does an extension to a substantial employment centre within Ipswich. It will constitute a General Employment Area (see below).

2.7.15 The other two areas listed above are of strategic regional significance for different reasons.

2.7.16 Adastral Park, Martlesham is centred on the reputation and international significance of the research establishment of British Telecom. There is a proposal to create a high-tech business cluster to be known as the Suffolk Innovation Park and this will provide an invaluable contribution to the employment base not only of Ipswich and Suffolk Coastal but also the region. It has the support of the East of England Development Agency and is referred to in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

2.7.17 The current Plan identifies greenfield land to the immediate south of Adastral park as the potential location. However, it will be necessary to consider the alternative scenario of accommodating it within the redevelopment and rationalisation of adjacent Adastral Park. Whichever Option is chosen will not diminish the significant strengthening of the strategic employment site

2.7.18 The Port of Felixstowe is a container port of national importance that has recently been granted permission for a major reconfiguration. It is anticipated that this re-configuration alone will provide directly and indirectly for approximately 1200 new jobs.

### **Local Employment**

2.7.19 In addition to the strategic employment sites referred to above there will be a need to identify sites at the local level, the development of which will contribute to the provision of jobs. The settlement hierarchy will be used in the site selection whereby the larger settlements, notably the market towns, will be the subject of site specific allocations. This will be particularly relevant should the settlement be the location for housing growth.

2.7.20 The outcome will be a hierarchy of employment sites. This hierarchy has regard to the level, scale and siting of existing employment uses, the proposed allocations and the new overarching settlement hierarchy and countryside policies.

- 
- 2.7.21 **Strategic Employment Sites** – sites of more than local economic importance. Two are identified, the Port of Felixstowe and Adastral Park at Martlesham.
- 2.7.22 **General Employment Areas** – it is anticipated that most economic activity of a general nature will take place on these areas, including any extensions to them. Most existing employment provision at the market towns would fall within this category although potential may exist at Rendlesham, a key service centre, on the site of the former Bentwaters airbase. This will need to be explored in the Site Specific Allocations and Policies.
- 2.7.23 **Local Employment Areas** – these consist of more than one business and generally occur throughout the district, whether it is in urban or rural locations. They provide employment and help to retain viable and balanced communities. They are numerous and generally small in scale. Uses will be restricted to B1 and B2 uses only. The suitability of new sites will be determined by the policies of the Core strategy but will generally be resisted where traffic generation is a major concern.

### **EXISTING LAND AND PROPERTY**

- 2.7.24 In recognition of the fact that existing employment areas comprise the bulk of employment provision within the area, and that these companies comprise the core of the local economy the policy emphasis will continue to be on retaining these areas in employment use.
- 2.7.25 It will be important to resist the loss of the employment potential to other uses and to ensure that development does not take place to the detriment of other objectives of the Core Strategy. A surplus of employment land on identified sites does not necessarily imply that it should be released elsewhere. There is likely to be demand for good quality premises that are affordable and offer good value for money. This is reflected in the identified high levels of entrepreneurship in the district and demand from start up companies.
- 2.7.26 Discussions with local commercial agents have reinforced the economic assessment. Occupier demand is strong for small premises on a freehold basis. Sites in good locations and with good communications, particularly in the south of the district, offer the best prospects for business use. However, in the short term, viability constraints (i.e. costs of development exceeding end values) may continue to hinder business workspace schemes coming forward.
- 2.7.27 Sites at risk of decline are those that are occupied by economic sectors and functions in decline, i.e. those closely related to manufacturing and production. They also include sites that have been vacant for long periods of time and have been unsuccessfully marketed, and/or where there is dereliction or a significant cost involved in bringing a site back into use. Sites that are more remote and isolated from transport networks are also likely to be at risk of decline, as well as those that have ageing premises and/or that have high vacancy levels.

### **Alternative Options**

- 2.7.28 **Option One** – continue with existing policy. Under this policy, sites are encouraged to remain in employment use unless their loss would not cause or accentuate a significant shortfall in employment land, or there would be a substantial planning benefit in permitting alternative uses. This policy has been reasonably successful, however its guidance is limited.
- 2.7.29 **Option Two** – continues the emphasis on retaining employment land in employment use, but looks to provide more positive and explicit guidance as to what would be acceptable and what would not. This option introduces a sequential approach to the redevelopment of employment land. First and foremost land would be expected to remain in employment use, although not necessarily the same employment use. If this is not possible, the second stage would require the site to be re-developed as a mixed use site, incorporating at least some employment use. Should the first two tests not prove viable, an alternative use or mix of uses will be sought which offers greater potential benefits to the community, in meeting local business and employment needs. Only if this were not possible, or economically viable, would a change of use to residential be considered and only then if the site is located within a settlement with a

physical limit boundary. Such an approach would make positive provision for redevelopment and change of use to exploit structural and other changes in the local economy.

2.7.30 In respect of this Option the following criteria would be used to assess sites:

(a) Location and Accessibility

- Sites in or close to urban areas, with good access to a readily available workforce, particularly those around Ipswich and Felixstowe. Whilst demand for premises in rural areas is likely to generally be more limited because of the inferior accessibility and communications, established/existing employment sites in rural areas may well be sustainable.
- There is likely to be greater demand for sites in the south of the district, where there are higher employment densities.
- However, in the medium to longer term (10 years plus), there could be greater business opportunities in the *north of the district* which are stimulated as a result of changes to the A12, the closure of Sizewell A and the decline in agriculture.
- Sites that are located close to the primary road network (ideally with immediate access to, but otherwise within a reasonable distance e.g. 1.5 miles), and particularly the A12 and A14.
- Sites that have good access to public transport (i.e. those within 3 miles of a public transport interchange). It is likely that access to roads will be the primary driver of demand for sites particularly in the rural areas of the district, however good access to public transport is also important for sustainability reasons.

(b) Sectors and Segments

- Sites that are in B1 uses, though there will be additional requirements for B8 uses as a result of the growth of the port and there may also be a small requirement for B2 property as a result of market churn.
- Demand is likely to be greatest from business service related companies that require either; town centre/high street offices, business parks and light industrial/workshop accommodation.
- Properties offering units of smaller size to cater for small and medium enterprises (SME's).
- Properties that are well occupied and have low vacancy levels (e.g. 10% or less)
- Some rural sites will need to be retained in order to meet the needs of strong local sectors such as growing local produce, repair of motor vehicles and retail.

(c) Tenure

- There is reported to be greatest demand for freehold sites and premises away from Ipswich. There may be some demand for leasehold properties, particularly from smaller or start-up companies who require this flexibility.

(d) Site Conditions and Restraints

- Sites which have no or minimal constraints where the high cost of development would not hinder the site being taken forward. Sites that have significant constraints such as contamination or major infrastructure requirements are less likely to be taken forward in the shorter term.
- Sites where the preferred uses are compatible with neighbouring uses, for example B8 uses would not be suitable close to residential areas, but B1 uses may be.
- Serviced sites, which have good site conditions, for example where there are no derelict premises on site and where the site has a flat topography and a regular shape, which allows flexibility of development.

**QUESTIONS - Economy**  
**Retention of employment sites**

- Q22 Do you consider it important to retain existing employment land? Y/N
- Q23 Which of the Options listed do you consider offers the best opportunity to retain land in employment use and why?  
Option 1  
Option 2

**THE RURAL ECONOMY**

**Draft Objective 7 - The Rural Economy**

To strengthen and diversify the rural economy through:

- **Fostering the maintenance and expansion of existing employment and creation of new employment in the market towns of the district**
- **Encouraging small-scale farm and rural diversification enterprises which are compatible with objectives in respect of the environment**
- **Supporting agriculture**
- **Expanding the tourism offer where it is compatible with the objectives in respect of the environment**

2.7.31 The rural economy comprises a myriad of uses the largest of which are the agricultural and horticultural businesses. In terms of land use and land coverage, it is agriculture and forestry that most influence the appearance of the countryside and thereby comprise a major influence in terms of the tourist industry, the expansion of which is a Council priority. It is important therefore that the Plan recognises the variety of uses that go on within the rural areas, and that can be satisfactorily accommodated within them. At the same time, it is crucial to ensure that uses that are more appropriately located within the main urban centres and market towns are directed to these locations, if the quality of the rural environment is to be maintained and enhanced.

**AGRICULTURE AND FARM DIVERSIFICATION**

2.7.32 Agriculture plays an important role in the economy of Suffolk Coastal, with employment in the sector nearly 5 times the national average. However, the industry has been undergoing many changes and will continue to do so in the future with an expected decline in the numbers of people employed. With limited opportunities for alternative employment within the rural areas the Council is keen to provide a policy framework within which alternative and supporting uses to the main agricultural use can be permitted.

2.7.33 Consistent with the general policies on the Countryside and in accordance with national and regional guidance, the Council will continue to resist development that has no need to be located there.

**Farm Diversification**

2.7.34 Farm diversification schemes could include the creation of workshops and other employment accommodation, tourist accommodation, leisure and recreation and farm shops.

2.7.35 Farm diversification schemes will be generally encouraged where they:

- a) Contribute to the viability of the farm enterprise as a whole, and/or its continued operation;
- b) Are for economic or community purposes, appropriate in scale and nature to the location;
- c) Do not generate traffic of a level and nature that cannot be accommodated on the existing road network;
- d) Are well related to the existing settlement pattern;
- e) Make best use of existing buildings and previously developed (brownfield) land;
- f) Are acceptable in terms of such factors as landscape impact, design, nature conservation and historic interest; and
- g) Do not involve residential development unless consistent with other policies of the Core Strategy.

### **Alternative Options**

2.7.36 Option One – This option continues the existing approach to development within the countryside. This limits development in these areas to that which is essential for the efficient operation of agriculture, forestry and horticulture or is otherwise permitted by policies in the Local Plan, in order to protect the landscape quality and character of the countryside for its own sake. A variety of other policies provide guidance on specific issues such as change of use of redundant buildings, extensions to commercial activities etc.

2.7.37 This policy and its associated policies have generally worked well, restricting unnecessary and inappropriate development within the countryside. However, the approach has been criticised for being overly protective and inflexible when considering other uses not necessarily covered by other policies. For example, in relation to forestry and land owned or leased by the Forestry Commission, the government's priority for these areas is now to increase their recreation/leisure potential rather than the forestry business which is no longer expanding. The more inflexible the policy, the more difficult it becomes to respond to changing economic circumstances and the more innovative or unusual ways in which the rural economy can benefit.

2.7.38 Option Two – This option continues the existing approach required by government and regional guidance. The countryside is an important economic asset supporting a variety of uses including agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism and a host of other smaller service industries and businesses. The countryside is also a dynamic environment that is to be protected for its own sake.

2.7.39 This option would require that a key element of the plan would be to look to ensure that opportunities to maximise the economic potential of the rural areas, particularly where this will secure employment locally, are supported. It allows for a more refined approach to identifying what is likely to be acceptable within the different countryside areas. In relation to individual proposals, issues such as scale, access to the main road networks, to markets, labour etc. will still be important.

**QUESTION – economy**  
**Farm Diversification**

Q24 With regard to the rural economy and to farm diversification, in what circumstances might the conversion or re-use of a rural building be appropriate?

## **TOURISM**

### **Draft Objective 8 Tourism**

**To promote all year round tourism based on the attributes (environmental, cultural and people) of the area, which optimises the benefits of employment and value to the economy that is compatible with maintaining the quality of life of the area.**

- 2.7.40 The variety of the environment within the district, its history and culture enable it to appeal to a range of tourist markets including day visits, short breaks and traditional summer holiday type uses. The district is within easy reach of large sections of the population of the south-east and Midlands. The opportunity also exists to raise the profile of the area as a place to visit for foreign tourists linked with the 2012 Olympics as few visit the area at present. Improving the tourism potential of Felixstowe is seen as an important element in achieving the regeneration of the town. Increasingly, the district is also seen as an area attractive to second homeowners.
- 2.7.41 Tourism is recognised as being one of the five largest industries within the UK and this importance is recognised in the district. The overall value of tourism to Suffolk Coastal has been estimated at £142 million. Of this, approximately 37%, was generated by staying visitors and 63% generated by day visitors. This expenditure supports estimated 2,800 full time job equivalents and when part-time and seasonal jobs are considered tourism expenditure supports almost 4000 actual jobs. Evidence suggests that bed-spaces are full at weekends during the summer period. Tourism is therefore an important and growing sector of the economy.
- 2.7.42 There are a number of issues in relation to increasing the tourist potential of the area. Managing visitor numbers; second homes; encouraging new tourist uses which complement/link up existing provision, maximising the maritime connections, and the potential decline of the resort of Felixstowe.
- 2.7.43 The tourism appeal of the district to the west of the A12 receives less attention but to the east has in some instances resulted in significant adverse impacts on the host communities. Also, due to the soft nature of the coastline, erosion and risk of flooding have presented a continual threat in some areas.
- 2.7.44 Improving the tourist offer is a Council priority, not only for the wider district, but also particularly in relation to its role in the regeneration of Felixstowe, and to the continuing prosperity of the market towns. Providing continued support in principle to the tourist industry would therefore remain a priority within the Plan. At the same time, it is recognised that such support needs to be tailored to ensure that any expansion does not materially harm in particular the natural and built environment assets that are the main attractions for visitors to the area.

### **Alternative Options**

- 2.7.45 The alternative options in relation to the Core Strategy therefore relate to the approach that the Council should adopt.
- 2.7.46 **Option One** is a continuation of the current policies whereby proposals are assessed against their impact on the environment and local communities. There is a general strategy of resisting large-scale development in the AONB, notably the “honeypots” that have developed there. Small-scale activities, notably the provision of accommodation, are encouraged across the district. Such an approach tends to be sweeping in its application and fails to apply sustainability criteria.

2.7.47 Option two is to apply a discerning policy whereby the district is divided into distinct areas where the tourism potential could be managed, encouraged or resisted. The result would be a hierarchy of tourism development, linked to the hierarchy of settlements created earlier, where proposals for tourism-related development are encouraged subject to their capacity to absorb new development and additional visitors.

2.7.48 Under this Option the district of Suffolk Coastal will consist of distinct areas. The areas would be:

- a) The resort of Felixstowe, which is a priority for new tourist activity
- b) The market towns of Framlingham, Leiston and Saxmundham. These are considered to have the capacity to absorb some modest development thereby taking pressure off the more sensitive areas
- c) Aldeburgh and Woodbridge. Two small towns in sensitive locations within and adjacent to the AONB respectively. The protection of their settings will be of prime importance
- d) The Heritage Coast. The environment is of national significance and the only development to be permitted will be individual conversions to tourist accommodation to a high standard of design
- e) The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. Development should not have a material adverse impact on such matters as landscape and the local highway network
- f) The remaining area east of the A12. Modest developments may be permitted close to settlements that offer a range of facilities.
- g) The area west of the A12. This area has the potential to absorb additional tourist pressure and subject to the implications for the environment, including the generation of traffic, the Council will support and promote tourism west of the A12

2.7.49 Where necessary the Council will support the introduction of local management solutions to the problems created by tourism.

#### QUESTION - Tourism

Q25 Are there any other issues relating to either the provision of tourist facilities or tourist accommodation which you think the Issues and Options consultation should address?

### **RETAIL AND RETAIL CENTRES**

#### **Draft Objective 9 Retail Centres**

**To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres; to foster market towns as service, employment and retail centres; and to encourage the retention of appropriate local services including post offices and shops in villages and district centres.**

2.7.50 National and regional policy guidance requires Local Authorities to identify a retail hierarchy within their areas reflecting, for each centre, both their current and future roles. It acknowledges that this may include the expansion or managed contraction of centres.

2.7.51 Research undertaken both within the region as a whole and within the district did not identify any need for major change to the retail structure within the district to meet future and existing need. Emphasis within this part of the region is on maintaining and enhancing the viability and vitality of existing retail centres, and making proper provision for new forms of retail distribution. No need has been proven requiring a new retail centre to be provided.

2.7.52 This advice is supplemented by a Retail Study commissioned by the Council and published

August 2003. This looked at the main urban areas of Felixstowe and Ipswich Fringe and the five market towns. Whilst some of the findings in the study have been acted upon, or been superseded by events, much of their commentary remains valid and useful. Where minor adjustments in provision are promoted, through the study it is intended that these will be addressed under the site-specific policies or area action plans, due to their limited impact in relation to the overall strategic approach to be set out in the Core Strategy. The role of the Core Strategy in relation to retail provision is to identify the retail hierarchy within the District and to provide guidance in relation to the type, scale and level of development appropriate to each level of the hierarchy.

2.7.53 The district is supported by a number of retail centres. These are:

- a) towns and market towns (Felixstowe and the five market towns of Aldeburgh of Framlingham; Leiston Saxmundham and Woodbridge)
- b) Villages and
- c) District and local centres in the urban areas

2.7.54 Beyond the district boundaries the retail pattern is influenced by:

- a) Regional centres – Ipswich and Norwich
- b) Major retail centres – Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds

2.7.55 The Option is available to draw up a retail hierarchy to reflect the existing levels of provision and settlement roles as set out in a settlement hierarchy. This also takes on board the likely scales of future development as set out in the development Options. New development will also be considered in respect of the profiles set out in the Council's Vision. The hierarchy is defined as follows:

Major Centre - (Felixstowe)

Should incorporate a range of provision including convenience stores, supermarket, comparison goods, and retail warehousing

Market Towns – (Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Leiston, Saxmundham, Woodbridge)

Should incorporate a range of provision including convenience stores, supermarket, and comparison shopping provision. Emphasis will be on retaining the range of provision to meet the needs of the towns and their hinterlands whilst supporting their role as local tourist centres.

Key Service Centres - (Alderton, Blythburgh, Bramfield, Dennington, Earl Soham, Eyke, Grundisburgh, Hollesley, Kirton, Knodishall, Martlesham Village, Melton Village Orford, Otley, Peasenhall, Rendlesham, Snape, Trimley St Martin, Trimley St Mary, Ufford Westleton, Wickham Market, Witnesham, Yoxford)

Should include provision of convenience and a small range of comparison goods shopping. Emphasis will be on retention of existing provision.

Local Service Centres

Should include provision of convenience shopping. This could include provision in the form of a local farm shop, or similar linked/ancillary to another use. Emphasis will be on retention of existing provision.

Other Villages/Countryside

Where no provision currently exists, (this includes the provision of a farm shop or similar) this situation is unlikely to change. Any proposals for development should be re-directed towards higher order settlements that by their nature are more sustainable.

2.7.56 The only area where a potential alternative option would apply is the Ipswich Policy Area. This area is seen as an extension to the urban area of Ipswich, which is identified within the RSS retail hierarchy as a major regional centre, reflecting its role as the county town. Within the Core Strategy, it is an area that is identified as capable of accommodating significant

levels of development and already contains retail provision at local and district centres within Rushmere and Kesgrave. At the eastern extent of the Ipswich Policy Area within the Suffolk Coastal Area, is Martlesham Heath, which effectively operates as an out of town retail centre, including a superstore and retail warehouse and leisure provision. It is well related to local areas of housing, public transport provision and the strategic employment site at Adastral Park and would serve an expanded population within this wider Ipswich Policy Area.

2.7.57 However, wider expansion of the area would be likely to result in an unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of Woodbridge town centre situated only four miles distant. Policy emphasis from the national and regional level is that the role of market towns should be supported. Given the importance of Woodbridge in its wider role as a market town, important both to local residents, businesses and visitors, and to its role in shaping the future Vision for the district, further expansion of Martlesham Heath has significant potential consequences.

### **Town Centres**

2.7.58 .58 The boundaries of town centres and district centres will be identified on the Proposals Map. Key to the commercial success of town centres is retail activity. Where necessary, frontages will be identified where retail (A1) uses should be focused. These will be primary frontages.

2.7.59 Within primary frontages it is recognised that non-retail uses such as food and drink outlets and financial services can play a complementary role to retail. However, these should not dominate and the Council will seek to ensure that such uses continue to occupy a minor proportion of the overall floorspace and not create an over-concentration along a particular frontage.

2.7.60 The extent of such concentration may vary within each town centre. Any amendments to these designations will be dealt with under site specific policies or area action plans, whichever is the most appropriate to individual circumstances.

2.7.61 A mixture of uses in a town centre can add to its vitality particularly at night. However, it has to be recognised that there may be some loss of amenity, particularly for local residents.

#### **QUESTION - Retail**

Q26 Are there any issues relating to retailing that you think should be addressed as a priority?

### **TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY**

#### **HEADLINE FACTS – TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY**

- Rail services exist between Ipswich and Felixstowe giving direct access into London; and between Ipswich and Lowestoft providing Woodbridge, Saxmundham and a number of smaller settlements with direct rail access.
- Funding of improvements to the rail freight network has been agreed as part of the re-configuration package recently agreed for the port of Felixstowe
- The only trunk road in the district is the A14 running between Felixstowe and Ipswich that is dualled for the major part of its length, giving access eventually to the national motorway network. Although a major freight route difficulties can be experienced if blockages occur east of the Orwell Bridge, as no suitable alternative route is available.
- The A12 provides the main route north to south through the district, but is only dualled for a small part of its length.

- Most of the higher order settlements are served by “B” class roads. Elsewhere much of the road network is single-track roads’ with passing places.
- Good bus routes operate within and between the larger settlements, particularly between Martlesham Heath out of town centre and BT HQ and Ipswich.
- A number of local and longer distance cycle ways exist throughout the district.
- The district contains a good network of footpaths
- For many of the residents living in the rural parts of the district having access to a car is essential to the quality of life. Many do not have regular public transport links to market towns.
- The district is a net exporter of labour.
- 68% of the population travels to work by car compared with 61% in Great Britain as a whole
- One Air Quality Management Zone has been declared at the Lime Kiln Quay /Thoroughfare/St Johns Street cross roads in Woodbridge.
- The district council has very few powers or responsibilities in relation to the operation of either the road or rail network. The majority of relevant planning policies are therefore contained in the RSS.

**The Community Strategy identifies as Key Aims:**

- Develop appropriate public transport services, including community transport, in market towns linked to good public transport from the major towns and employment areas;
- Develop good community transport services
- Improve road safety through traffic management measures and education

***You have told us the issues are:***

- Future development should be located in areas where day-to-day facilities and services are available by public transport, walking and cycling.
- It is naïve to think that most people will live close to work and not to travel by car
- There is a need for policies supporting cycling and walking
- The A12 north of Wickham Market needs to be upgraded due to increased daily and holiday traffic.
- Support for the strategic employment sites should also include reference to the need for transport infrastructure.
- Increasing tourism development may have traffic implications.
- Concern at the volume of heavy lorries on rural roads.

## **TRANSPORT PROVISION**

### **Introduction**

- 2.7.62 Responsibility for local transport lies with Suffolk County Council as the highway authority for Suffolk. The authority prepares transport strategy, primarily in the form of the Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 2.7.63 A key objective of both county and national policy is to ensure that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.
- 2.7.64 The diverse nature of Suffolk coastal is a particular challenge for transport delivery. The northern part is predominantly rural with the population living in towns and villages that increasingly act as dormitory settlements. Transport policies for these areas need to reflect the facts that:
- Facilities are dispersed and employment opportunities may be distant; and
  - Many people do not have access to a car

- 2.7.65 The southern part of the district is more densely populated and transport issues relate to the movement of people between residential, employment and commercial centres. The links to Ipswich and Felixstowe, as major employment centres, are important for accessibility to jobs and services.

**Draft Objective 10 Transport**

**To minimise the environmental impact of travel, by reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport, and widening choice of modes.**

**Sustainable Transport (including car parking)**

- 2.7.66 The basis of the transport objective is to promote more sustainable transport choices for people. Although parts of the district are rural and alternative modes are not available the overall aim should be to encourage the use of transport modes other than the car. New development that is likely to generate significant journeys in terms of numbers and lengths should be sited in locations that are well served, or have the potential to be well served by public transport, walking and cycling. The most accessible locations tend to be the major urban areas, market towns and key service centres which all act as transport hubs. This is the basis of the Settlement Hierarchy.
- 2.7.67 In general the Council will seek to improve pedestrian and cycling networks in the district, not only in respect of access to jobs and shops but also the countryside (including equestrian facilities), green space and recreational facilities. Multi-user routes will be supported.
- 2.7.68 In respect of the provision of car parking the Council has options.
- 2.7.69 Option One is to apply a uniform parking standard across the district. Such an option does not enable the most efficient use of land in areas well served by public transport such as town centres where a proportion of the site does not need to be devoted to the motor car. It also fails to recognise the needs of rural areas where one (or more) cars may be essential.
- 2.7.70 The alternative is Option Two whereby the level of parking provision required for new development will be linked to the accessibility of the local area. This will mean a differential approach to parking standards within the district. This runs the risk of being confusing to planning applicants and the public.

**QUESTIONS - Transport  
Car parking**

- Q27 Which of the two options do you prefer and why?  
Option 1  
Option 2
- Q28 Under what circumstances do you think, might a lower standard of car parking be justified.

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## **Connectivity**

- 2.7.71 Ensuring effective transport links within the district has already been highlighted. In addition, links to Ipswich are also considered important given its role as a regional centre. The establishment of such links will require effective joint working between the District Council, County Council and adjoining authorities if a high quality, reliable network is to be achieved.
- 2.7.72 The market towns already act as transport hubs that act as feeder networks serving the surrounding areas. It is also important that these provide effective links to Ipswich and ultimately to other parts of the Haven Gateway sub-region, the region and the rest of the country. Important to the network is the East Suffolk rail line with stations at Westerfield, Woodbridge, Melton, Wickham Market (sited at Campsea Ash), Saxmundham and Darsham. The Council will work in partnership with relevant authorities and agencies to help improve services on this line.
- 2.7.73 Also important to the district are the freight and passenger connections to Felixstowe. In this respect the Council supports the improvements to the rail network that facilitate increased freight movement to and from the port by rail.

## **Demand Management**

- 2.7.74 Suffolk Coastal does not suffer the congestion problems that an urban authority might face. However, the district does contain part of the urban fringe of Ipswich, including the A12 and A14 trunk road, and there are issues in respect of the capacity of these roads to accommodate further traffic.
- 2.7.75 A recent study of the A14 Newmarket to Felixstowe corridor has identified two key issues that affect Suffolk Coastal:
- The overall capacity of the A14 to accommodate further traffic; and
  - East-west travel movements across Ipswich
- 2.7.76 In particular, the Orwell Bridge is of concern. The current usage by 60,000 vehicles per day brings it close to capacity at peak periods. This is predicted to rise to 76,000 by 2021. Of these movements only 59% are through movements. The remaining 41% are local – drivers using the bridge as a local southern ring road around Ipswich. When blockages occur the effects are very disruptive, particularly in respect of traffic serving the Port.
- 2.7.77 A further study is underway to examine east-west movements across Ipswich and to formulate proposals to increase capacity through management, road improvements or new construction. The outcome of this study will be available for a subsequent review of the Core Strategy.

## **The A12**

- 2.7.78 The A12 is a valuable artery running north to south through the district, connecting the rural areas with the primary route network and the rest of the country. It is essential to the local economy (including that of Lowestoft to the north) but journey times are hampered by stretches of single carriageway and reduced speed limits. Discussions are currently underway regarding the possible provision of a by-pass, or other solution for Farnham and Stratford St Andrew where the road is particularly narrow and twisting with buildings located very close to the roadline.
- 2.7.79 Option One. As noted earlier, the maintenance and up grading of the road system within the district is the responsibility of the County Council. Policies are included within the RSS that provide general support for improving the network, throughout the county and wider afield as part of the Regional Transport Strategy. Under this option, no specific reference to the up grading of the A12 or the possible provision of a by-pass would be included within the Core Strategy. Reliance for any such provision would be dealt with under policies within the RSS.

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Government advice is that policies should not be repeated unnecessarily.

- 2.7.80 Option Two. Under this Option, a policy would be included within the Core Strategy, specifically supporting the upgrading of this route, given its importance to local traffic movements to much of the district, and to the lack of suitable alternative routes, particularly for delivery and other heavy goods vehicles. Such support would however need to be caveated to reflect other local issues, not least the fact that the settlements are located within a Special Landscape Area. Any scheme to improve the road would therefore have to be fully acceptable in terms of its environmental impact.

**TRANSPORT - Connectivity**

Q29 What significant gaps in the transport network are there, across the district?

Q30 What suggestions do you have as to how those gaps might be filled?



# **THE CORE STRATEGY & OPTIONS**

## **BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **Theme 4 - Protecting and enhancing the environment**

**To protect, improve and use our environment in a way that not only benefits the people who live, work and visit the area, but also leaves a rich and diverse legacy for future generations.**

## 2.8 ENVIRONMENT

### HEADLINE FACTS – THE ENVIRONMENT

- One-third of the district is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
Considerable parts of the district are of local, national and international importance for wildlife and biodiversity
- 50 kilometres of the district's 55 kilometres coastline, is designated as Heritage Coast.
- In the villages and built-up areas there are 33 Conservation Areas.
- The townscape of many of the towns and villages is of exceptional quality, not only due to their history and heritage but also their character and built form
- Across the district are 2706 Listed Buildings, 59 being Grade I and 164 Grade II\*.
- The district has a rich archaeological heritage, with 120 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the most spectacular possibly being Sutton Hoo, the location of an Anglo Saxon Treasure.
- In geographic terms the majority of the district is rural in character but almost 60% of the population lives in the main towns or the urban fringe of Ipswich
- 16% of the agricultural land is grade 1 and 2 in quality. Significantly more is classified as grade 3
- Of the coastline:
  - 6.5 kilometres is defended by the Council against erosion;
  - 16 kilometres is defended by the Environment Agency against flooding;
  - 5.5 and 2 kilometres are defended by private frontages against erosion and flooding respectively;
  - 22 kilometres consists mainly of vulnerable soft cliffs or sand and shingle ridges.
- Within the district are 324 kilometres of designated main rivers (287 kilometres fluvial and 37 tidal);
- The main rivers are the Alde/Ore (including the Butley and Fromus), Blyth (including the Dunwich), Deben (including the Fynn and Lark), Minsmere, Orwell and Thorpeness Hundred;
- The decommissioning process for Sizewell A Magnox Nuclear Power Station began in late 2006 and is due last several years.
- The government is currently considering the potential of nuclear power to generate the nation's energy needs. This may have implications for the current Sizewell site

### The **Community Strategy** identifies as **KEY ISSUES**:

- To safeguard, enhance and manage the distinctive high quality of the environment of the district
- To undertake practical measures to improve public awareness, understanding of and promoting of recycling, energy conservation, water conservation, renewable energy and pollution control
- To improve the process of estuary and coastal management, integrating social, recreational, economic and environmental issues and actions
- Feeling safe/being safe from crime

### ***You have told us the issues are:***

- Maintaining high quality design.
- Recycling waste.
- Energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Conservation of water resources.
- Coastline is subject to pressures, both human and natural.
- Flooding
- Air quality
- The impact of changes in agriculture on the economy

- The need for an over-arching objective relating to biodiversity and landscape
- There is a need for an over-arching objective relating to the protection of the countryside and coast.
- The value of the countryside to biodiversity enhancement to tourism

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 2.8.1 The acknowledged quality of the district's built and natural environments is one of its key assets, making it an attractive area to live and work, and for attracting tourists. Maintaining this quality is one of the Council's stated priorities. There is however a balance to be struck between maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment, whilst recognising that the area will always be subject to change, not all of which change is covered by planning legislation. The role of the Core Strategy is therefore two-fold in this regard. Firstly it will provide advice and guidance in relation to those matters over which it has direct control through the planning legislation. Secondly it will look to provide appropriate support to other plans and strategies of statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission where these impact on the local environment.
- 2.8.2 The role of the Core Strategy will be to support the national and international designations for both nature conservation and landscape interest. Changes to the boundaries of these areas is however beyond the remit of the Council so is not an issue for debate.
- 2.8.3 In relation to the built environment, the designation of conservation areas; scheduled ancient monuments and the listing of buildings are all issues that can be addressed outside of the local plan process. The role of the Core Strategy in relation to these topics will be to provide general advice supporting their retention and enhancement whilst minimising any significant adverse impacts upon them. These can be covered by general development control policies.
- 2.8.4 In respect of air pollution the Council has declared one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Woodbridge and is currently working on an action plan to hopefully secure an improvement in the existing situation. Whilst there are no other Air Quality Management Areas identified, there is a potential conflict between siting new development close to the main road and rail networks. Care will need to be taken to ensure that the scale and location of new development does not create new problems that could result in additional AQMA's having to be declared. This may influence the location and mix of uses on potential development sites. It is an issue therefore best addressed at the site specific allocation level and no alternative options are identified in relation to the Core Strategy,
- 2.8.5 It is considered that other pollution issues such as those relating to noise, odour and light can be adequately dealt with under generic development control policies, or other legislation. The Core Strategy policies in relation to the siting and potential change of use of, existing employment sites is particularly relevant in this context.
- 2.8.6 There are however a number of issues which the Core Strategy can usefully address, and where alternative approaches to achieving stated objectives do present themselves.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT**

### **Draft Objective 11 - Protecting and Enhancing the Environment**

To maintain and enhance the quality of the district's distinctive natural and built environments, by:

- The careful use of siting, design and impact of new development and limiting the scale of development to that appropriate to its location;
- Ensuring development minimises the use of natural resources by utilising recycled materials where appropriate, minimises greenhouse gas emissions, helps to reduce waste and minimises the risk of pollution.
- Encouraging and promoting schemes which create renewable energy where consistent with the need to safeguard residential amenity, the environment and the landscape;
- Minimising the risk of flooding and ensuring appropriate management of land within flood plains
- Improving the process of estuary and coastal management, incorporating an integrating social, recreational, economic, physical and environmental issues and actions

## **QUALITY OF DESIGN**

### **Design Generally**

- 2.8.7 Most issues relating to quality of design, energy efficiency measures, use of re-cycled materials; local distinctiveness, etc will be addressed through the generic development control policies. This will include "designing out crime", which is particularly relevant given the priority accorded to safety by the Local Strategic Partnership and the Council itself.
- 2.8.8 An issue for the Core Strategy to address is to whether or not different levels of design should be acceptable in different areas across the district.
- 2.8.9 Option One – This option continues the approach set out in the adopted Local Plan, which essentially demands higher quality of design to be provided in specific areas such as the AONB and Special Landscape Areas and conservation areas. This option recognises that within some areas design issues will be of particular importance but could equally be used as an excuse to accept a poorer standard of development elsewhere. As such there is a danger that to continue with it as written would fail to maximise opportunities to enhance the quality of the district's environment, contrary to the Council's stated priority.
- 2.8.10 Option Two – This option proposes a high standard of design to be applied "across the board" within a generic design policy(s). Where additional advice is required in relation to a specific aspect of design, for example "massing", in relation to a particular area or site, this advice would be targeted by inclusion within the relevant site-specific policy. This policy approach is considered to better reflect the Council's aspirations for its area as set out in its Vision but could still be used to properly reflect very localised design issues.
- 2.8.11 In relation to either option, the design of new development will need to be considered in terms of both its aesthetics and the function it is required to perform.

### **Art**

- 2.8.12 Artists can play a significant role in shaping the district. From major new build and regeneration schemes, through village greens, play schemes, community halls and town

signage, to the small details of individual buildings artists can work with planners and communities to create distinctive, pleasing environments which respond to local need. Experience around the country suggests that best results are achieved when art and the involvement of an artist are included at an early stage in the project.

- 2.8.13 Option One – To continue as existing. No specific policy is included within the adopted Local Plan on the provision of public art. It is provided on an ad hoc basis. The problem with this type of approach is that art and the contribution it can make to a development scheme tends to be thought about at the last minute. In terms of developer contributions, it is often last on the list of requirements if it is thought about at all.
- 2.8.14 Option Two – Under this option specific reference is included within the plan either in its own right, or as part of the generic development control policies to the contribution art can and should be making to the development process.

<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>Design</b>	
Q31	Which option do you prefer and why? Option 1 Option 2
Q32	Should the Council be actively promoting innovative new designs? YES/NO Why?
<b>Art</b>	
Q33	Is it appropriate for the Council to require the input of public art into development projects? YES/NO
Q34	If YES, what form might the public art take?

## **BIODIVERSITY**

<p><b>Draft Objective 12 - Biodiversity</b></p> <p><b>To maximise opportunities to enhance biodiversity by protecting and enhancing statutory and non-statutory protected sites, protected species and biodiversity action plan habitats and species, and contributing to regional targets through the restoration and creation of new priority habitats</b></p>
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- 2.8.15 Biodiversity means the variety of life forms, ecological roles they play and the genetic diversity they contain. Biodiversity is important in Suffolk Coastal because of the extent and range of sites and habitats in the District as set out below. These are of international/national importance (Special Protection Areas, SSSIs, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar) and also locally important habitats such as County Wildlife Sites or local nature reserves.

Table 5 Areas of Wildlife Importance

Site type	No. of sites
Wetland of International Importance (RAMSAR)	4 (7,917 ha)
Special Protection Area (SPA)	4 (7,917 ha)
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	5 (3,755.4 ha)
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	45 (10,630 ha)
County Wildlife Sites (CWS)	206 (5,682 ha)
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	.9 ha)

- 2.8.16 In 1992 the UK was one of 157 nations to sign up to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In 1994 the UK Biodiversity Action Plan was published confirming the Government's commitment to the principles and requirements of the Convention. The Government recognised that a national plan could only be implemented successfully if it was delivered at the local level. In Suffolk a working party was formed to prepare a Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan. This includes all relevant habitats and species that are identified in the UK Action Plan along with a number of Suffolk 'character' species that had been identified during the process of public consultation.
- 2.8.17 The Council is duty bound to afford protection to areas designated for their wildlife interest, with the highest levels of protection going to those areas of international and national importance. The issue in relation to the Core Strategy will be to ensure that sufficient regard is had to these areas when identifying levels and scales of new development to be accommodated throughout the district. Whilst some of the broad locations identified for development are included at this level, it is more of an issue to be addressed at the Site Specific Allocation stage where development will be expected to be steered away from these areas.
- 2.8.18 Whilst these designated areas are provided with protection, the potential exists nonetheless for all new developments to look at ways of increasing or protecting biodiversity. It is proposed to continue the approach set out in the adopted local plan which will require proposals to:
- a) Ensure prudent use of natural resources.
  - b) Achieve reduced levels of energy consumption as a result of the actual development and its future occupancy.
  - c) Reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.
  - d) Minimise air, noise and light pollution.
  - e) Make provision for waste minimisation and recycling.
  - f) Utilise sustainable construction methods
  - g) Where relevant safeguard, enhance and manage the culture and heritage of the district
  - h) Protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the varied landscape character within the district, reflecting landscape sensitivity and promoting local distinctiveness. Where development is justified proposals must include measures to enhance, restore or create special features of the landscape as appropriate

Opportunities for biodiversity to be further protected and enhanced will be assessed using a framework based on a network of:

- a) Designated sites (international, national, regional and local)
- b) Wildlife corridors
- c) The rivers, estuaries and coast
- d) Habitats and species identified in the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan

## **LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

### **Draft Objective 13 - Landscape**

**To identify opportunities to protect and enhance the various landscape character areas which exist within the district either through opportunities either linked to development or through other strategies.**

- 2.8.19 The district contains a variety of landscape types, all of which contribute to the quality of its environment. The coastal heaths and heritage coast areas are designated as being of national importance. As noted previously, to amend these boundaries is outside the Council's remit and there is no intention on the part of Natural England to change them. The district

does however contain other land that is designated at the county level as being important for its landscape value – the Special Landscape Area. Government guidance suggests that such locally designated areas should be deleted from local plans with policies being guided instead by advice set out in landscape character assessments. A landscape character assessment of the district is currently being undertaken as part of a wider countywide assessment.

- 2.8.20 Landscape character assessments recognise the merits of the landscape character types which have resulted from the differences in a range of features including field and settlement patterns, biodiversity, soils, cultural heritage and local building materials. The Council considers it important that these different character areas are conserved and enhanced, but that this must be integrated with the need to accommodate change in order to address social or economic objectives and meet the needs of communities. In doing so it will be necessary to ensure that not only is harm to the environment minimised but that opportunities are taken to bring about improvements wherever possible. This applies whether the initiative for change is brought about by land management decisions or new development.
- 2.8.21 Option One – Under this option, the SLA designation as set out in the adopted Local Plan would be deleted in the knowledge that work on a landscape character assessment was being undertaken. To adopt such an option runs the risk of these other locally important landscape areas being less protected by policy until such time as the landscape character assessment is adopted or agreed.
- 2.8.22 Option Two – Under this option, the SLA designation would be retained at least for the lifetime of the LDD, until its first review. The information and guidance contained in the landscape character assessment would be used to supplement the continuing landscape policies as and when it becomes available and has been adopted by the Council. Any decision that may be taken in the longer term to either delete or amend the SLA designation, would be based on the findings of the landscape character assessment and the success in implementing any guidelines generated by it. The success or otherwise of this approach would be monitored.

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

##### **Landscape designations**

Q35 Is sufficient consideration given to the landscape when determining development proposals? Y/N

Q36 If NO what suggestions do you have to address this?

#### **FLOOD RISK /COASTAL EROSION**

- 2.8.23 The District comprises gently undulating countryside intersected by a number of freshwater rivers such as the Deben, Alde and Ore, which have large flood plains. Much of the coastline is low lying, below sea level, protected by sea defences against tidal inundation.
- 2.8.24 Parts of the district are at therefore potentially at risk from both fluvial and tidal flood risk and from coastal erosion. Inevitably there are serious concerns about the impacts of coastal erosion and coastal flooding, both in respect of current properties at risk but also the long-term management of the area. These issues are therefore of considerable concern and are key factors in determining the scale and location of development. The implications arising from flood risk and coastal erosion are different to those of other environmental concerns, in that they can have a direct impact on human health and safety. It is therefore appropriate to raise them separately from other environmental concerns.

### **Draft Objective 14 - Flood Risk/Coastal Erosion**

**To recognise and accept that flood risk and coastal erosion will continue to impact to varying extents on different parts of the district.**

**To protect communities from flood risk or coastal erosion or, where that is not feasible, to have in place strategies for securing the long-term economic and social future of affected communities whilst addressing environmental objectives.**

### **Flood Risk**

2.8.25 The Environment Agency defines flood risk in terms of three Zones:

- Zone 1 has a low probability of flooding
- Zone 2 has a medium probability of flooding
- Zone 3a has a greater than 1 in 100 probability of river flooding in any one year or 1 in 200 of coastal flooding
- Zone 3b is the functional flood plain

2.8.26 In order to assist the process of determining where new development should be located, the Council has commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to be undertaken. This information will not be available until early 2007, but the information it contains will be used to influence the final choice of development sites and the phasing of their development. Further advice in relation to individual sites the subject of an individual planning application, is already provided by the Environment Agency.

2.8.27 The issue for consideration at the Core Strategy level is the same as that highlighted above, i.e. do the broad scales and location of development take sufficient note of issues relating to flood risk? Is the information currently available, sufficiently robust to enable a realistic approach to assess future development opportunities in advance of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment reporting?

2.8.28 The Council does not consider that waiting for the result of the strategic flood risk assessment is crucial to the development of the Core Strategy in that large parts of the district, including significant areas of land in and around the main settlements are not affected by flooding. It is considered that the information available to date is sufficiently robust to give a broad indication of what is likely or not likely to be acceptable at this level. No alternative option is therefore proposed in relation to the policy on settlement hierarchy. It is recognised however that the issue of flooding will be a factor when determining the site-specific options, and the possible phasing of individual sites through the Plan period.

### **Coastal Erosion**

2.8.29 The Suffolk coast is under threat from the sea and much is defended against erosion. Many of these defences demonstrate the risk of local instability. There is a Shoreline Management Plan in existence and this is being reviewed. This document is important as it identifies those coastal areas such as Dunwich where the coastline is expected to continue to erode.

2.8.30 Emerging from the Shoreline Management Plan review are likely to be areas where “managed realignment” is proposed. This is an approach whereby the natural processes of erosion and deposition are allowed to take place without the need for expensive engineering works. It brings benefits including the creation or recreation of inter-tidal habitats but may result in the loss of agricultural land and property. It can also have a major effect on current biodiversity. Equally, such re-alignment can result in the loss of valuable property and have a major impact on the economic and social infrastructure of communities. At its worst, it can result in the loss of complete communities.

- 2.8.31 The Core Strategy will need to take account of any proposals emerging from the review of the Shoreline Management Plan. It may be necessary to ensure that no permanent development is permitted in areas at risk from coastal erosion or inundation by the sea. Specific issues that the Plan might need to address include
- Requiring schemes to demonstrate that they have had regard to the Shoreline Management Plan;
  - Providing appropriate levels of protection from erosion or flooding for the assets of the area; or
  - Establishing the means by which the social, economic and environmental consequences of erosion/flooding are to be remedied.

<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>Flood risk</b>	
Q37	To what extent do you consider flood risk to be a reason for rejecting development proposals? STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE/ DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE
<b>Coastal erosion</b>	
Q38	To what extent do you consider risk from coastal erosion to be a reason for rejecting development proposals? STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE/ DISAGREE/STRONGLY DISAGREE

### Renewable Energy

- 2.8.32 The government has estimated that around one third of the country's carbon emissions come from energy generation. It therefore advocates, through Planning Policy Statement 22, the encouragement of schemes that utilise renewable energy resources. This should be in tandem with energy efficiency measures, particularly in new development.
- 2.8.33 The Suffolk Coastal area can contribute towards the generation of renewable energy, most notably through biomass schemes and wind power. The former will generally be supported, subject to the consideration of proposals for associated buildings. In respect of wind power the environment is a sensitive one and needs protection. As the concept of renewable energy is promoted at national level the Option of resisting wind power generation entirely is not appropriate. Instead the Core Strategy must contain a policy which encourages the generation of renewable energy, most notably to serve local communities, but protects the environmental assets of the area. In devising policies it is suggested that the general principles as set out in Table 6 is an Option.

Table 6 Renewable Energy Schemes

*Large" consists of more than 2 turbines or a height greater than 15 metres*

Area	Large Scale Schemes	Small Scale Schemes
International designations for Wildlife	Not appropriate	Only where the original objectives of the designation are not compromised.
National designations for landscape, wildlife and heritage	Not appropriate	Only where the original objectives of the designation are not compromised.
Other Areas	Only where there is no material adverse impact on the environment and amenity. Cumulative impact will be taken into account.	Only where the impact on the environment and amenity is not significant or can be mitigated. Cumulative impact will be taken into account. Schemes that provide for local energy consumption, including new development, will generally be supported.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Renewable Energy Schemes

Q37 Table \* sets out the Council's thoughts on when and where new renewable energy schemes would be acceptable. Do you agree with this assessment YES/NO.

Q38 If NO please provide reasons and you own alternative suggestions

### Nuclear Energy

- 2.8.34 ssues and discussions relating to the role of nuclear energy in helping to meet the nations energy requirement are pertinent to Suffolk Coastal given the location of two nuclear power stations Sizewell A and Sizewell B within the district.
- 2.8.35 In its 2003 Energy White Paper the government recognised that new nuclear build might be necessary if the UK is to meet its carbon reduction targets, but it concluded that the economics made it unattractive at that time. A commitment was made that *“before any decision to proceed with the building of new nuclear stations there will need to be the fullest public consultation and the publication of a further White paper setting out the Governments proposals”*
- 2.8.36 More recently the government has considered the role of nuclear generation through the consultation document *“Our energy challenge: securing clean affordable energy for the long term”*. It concluded *“nuclear power is a source of low carbon generation which contributes to the diversity of our energy supplies. Under likely scenarios for gas and carbon prices new nuclear power stations should yield economic benefits in terms of carbon reduction and security of supply. The government believes that nuclear has a role to play in the future UK generating mix alongside other low carbon generating options.”*
- 2.8.37 Having reached that conclusion the government consulted during 2006 on how decisions on the location on any new nuclear build should take place. The government proposals are to provide a strategic context for new nuclear build and that the various regulators would assure safety, security and radiological issues of design proposals. The role of the planning process would be to consider the suitability of any specific proposal and the mitigation of local impacts only i.e. the planning inquiries into new nuclear installations will not be expected to focus on whether there is a need for nuclear power.
- 2.8.38 One of the reasons for proposing this national strategic context is that the government sees the planning process as a potential significant delay in bringing forward energy schemes. The Sizewell B Planning Inquiry for example, took over 6 years from the start of the Inquiry to the decision being made, with much of that time taken up considering national policy, design and safety issues.
- 2.8.39 It is anticipated that the government will issue a White Paper in 2007 setting out the proposed strategic criteria for identifying the most suitable sites and indicate how potential sites meet these criteria. This process would be open for public consultation and thus potential sites will be identified. It is likely that the government sees the development of new nuclear stations occurring during the next decade which is during the plan period of the current Local Development Framework. Importantly, the Nuclear Industry has indicated that the most viable sites for new build are likely to be adjacent to existing nuclear generating plan, although there might be other attractive sites, for example other nuclear installations and sites with retiring fossil fuel generating stations.
- 2.8.40 Sizewell will undoubtedly be a site that will be considered as part of the national strategic assessment. It is located within the AONB and within the Heritage Coast in a sensitive

landscape. It is also close to sites identified as being of international importance for their wildlife interest. The protection of these areas is promoted through PPS7 “Sustainable Development in Rural Areas” which states “Major developments should not take place in these designated areas, except in exceptional circumstances.” The exceptional circumstances would include the requirement to demonstrate an overriding need for a development and that all other potential options have been properly discounted.

- 2.8.41 If an application for a new nuclear station were to be made, it would be submitted to the Secretary of State at the Department for Trade and Industry under the Electricity Act. Suffolk Coastal District Council would be a statutory consultee. There would need to be an assessment of the likely potential local impacts and their possible mitigation. The question needs to be asked whether the LDF should set out a policy framework for considering the local issues and how these issues should be assessed, especially as if a proposal comes forward, it will be within the timescale of the document.
- 2.8.42 Consideration also needs to be given to the fact that development of a new nuclear station may be undertaken at the same time as the decommissioning of the Sizewell A station. Sizewell B is currently proposed to generate electricity until 2035.
- 2.8.43 Set out below is the range of local/siting issues that the Council considers should be taken into account when looking at the impact of a new power station.

Potential Impacts to be Considered and Mitigation measures to be included-

- a) Proposed layout and design
- b) Grid connection / power line changes?
- c) Landscape/visual character assessment including cumulative effects
- d) Coastal erosion/coast protection issues
- e) Ecological impacts (on nearby designated sites)
- f) Construction management- sustainable procurement policy
- g) Transport issues- routing of vehicles during construction?- upgrade of roads? – use of rail and sea for access?
- h) Social issues – local community issues during long construction period- housing of workers in the local area
- i) Economic impacts upon the area during and after construction
- j) Site decommissioning
- k) On site storage of nuclear waste?

**ENVIRONMENT**  
**Nuclear Power**

Q39 Are there any other issues that you think should be taken into account when considering the impacts of a potential new nuclear station upon the local area?  
YES/NO

Q40 If YES what are they?

**Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in New developments**

- 2.8.44 The UK is committed to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and has set stringent targets of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> in the UK by 20% by 2010 and that by 2010, 10% of electricity is to be from renewable sources with 20% by 2020.
- 2.8.45 Suffolk Coastal District Council also signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in October 2006. As a signatory the District Council is committed to complying with the Kyoto Protocol (an international treaty signed in 1997 which included a binding commitment to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions) and producing its own climate change strategy for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and other green house gas emission.

- 2.8.46 The Options report at 2.9.33-2.9.34 currently deals only with large-scale renewable schemes and the issues to be considered but the document does not currently have options that should be considered for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and energy efficiency when considering all development proposals.
- 2.8.47 The Report of the Panel into the RSS has advocated pulling back from the level of detail on this issue to be included in LDF's as it was felt that it possibly cuts across other legislative requirements (such as the Building Regulations). However a statement by the Governments Planning Minister in July 2006 (therefore after the Panel Report) states “ *In particular the government expect all planning authorities to include policies in their development plan that require a percentage of the energy in new developments to come from on-site renewables where it is viable*”
- 2.8.48 New national planning guidance on Climate Change is expected shortly to which the new LDF will be expected to comply. In advance of that final guidance being published, the Council wishes to hear the views of consultees on requiring such a policy as an approach having regard to the wider issues on climate change (and the Council's signing of the Nottingham Declaration).
- 2.8.49 In considering this issue regard has to be had to the potential of the growth options in the Options report and the potential contribution such a policy provision could have, in addressing climate change at the local level. The Building Regulations are becoming more stringent on energy conservation over time so encouraging energy conservation above the current minimum requirements at the time of a potential planning application is considered appropriate.
- 2.8.50 If the Option of requiring renewables and energy efficiency measures is to be included and considered as part of a planning application, then the level of requirement has to be considered. Set against this, there is a need to consider the financial viability of schemes and its impact upon the character of our district with its countryside, Conservation Areas and the more dense suburban settlements. In response to the first of these points it is generally accepted that the costs of providing small-scale renewables and other energy efficient means would have an increased cost factor but that this is diminishing all the time as the costs of production reduce. The visual impact of these types of renewable energy schemes are rightly of concern but it is proposed these would be addressed through appropriate design policies but also through the provision of new Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 2.8.51 It is accepted that for this to be properly considered a new SPD will need to be explicit in how this is to be taken forward as a positive tool for development control purposes.

<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>Renewable energy / energy efficiency</b>	
Q43	As a matter of principle, should the requirement to provide a proportion of a scheme's energy to come from renewable sources apply to all forms of developments YES/NO
Q44	If NO which types of development do you consider should be excluded and why?
Q45	As a matter of principle, should the Council require all forms of development to maximise as far as practicable the use of energy efficiency measures? Y/N
Q46	If YES how do you suggest this might be achieved?

# **PART SIX**

## **THE CORE STRATEGY & OPTIONS**

### **COMMUNITY WELL BEING**

#### **Theme 5 - Develop a safe and healthy community**

**The Core Strategy will protect and promote the well being of the community in terms of its health, safety, leisure and cultural opportunities, and access to leisure opportunities.**

## 2.9 COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

### HEADLINE FACTS – COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

- 21% of the population of 115,000 is aged over 65 (compared with 17% in both the East of England and Great Britain as a whole). Conversely there is a much lower than average number of people between the ages of 18 and 34.
- The district has high life expectancy rates – women 82.4 years and men 78.
- The crime levels are low statistically but surveys show that fear of crime is high.
- The A14 and A12 are the two major roads serving the district; the A12 is a valuable backbone connecting to the north and beyond.
- There is access to some of the main towns by way of the East Suffolk Rail Line.
- In its first 3 years the Local Plan Policy on playspace contributions has created over £500,000 for community use.
- Deprivation occurs in some localised parts of the district

### The **Community Strategy** identifies as **PRIORITIES**:

- To give greater priority to meeting the needs of younger people, including providing them with opportunities to contribute to the development and delivery of services and activities to meet their needs, building on what young people actually want
- To empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over decision making and delivery of services
- To ensure our community is as healthy as possible by encouraging them to live a healthy lifestyle
- To promote better access for every member of our community, particularly younger and older people and families, to employment, services and facilities
- Promoting healthy living
- Feeling safe and being safe from crime

### The **Community Strategy** identifies as **KEY ISSUES**:

- Improved road safety through traffic management measures and education

### ***You have told us the issues are:***

- Perceived lack of public involvement in the planning process.
- Fear of crime.
- Lack of facilities for young people.
- Pressure on services caused by an ageing population
- Road safety, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Lack of integration of different modes of travel.
- Loss and lack of local facilities and services.
- Heavy lorries in rural areas.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Draft Objective 15 Physical and Community Infrastructure**

**To ensure that appropriate infrastructure, such as transport, utilities or community facilities are provided in order to address current deficiencies and meet the needs of new development.**

**In terms of community infrastructure to identify needs and deficiencies in public, voluntary and commercial service provision and seek new approaches to meet those needs and address deficiencies**

2.9.1 The Council identifies two types of infrastructure:

- Physical infrastructure – This includes transport facilities, water supply, foul and surface water sewage, drainage, waste disposal, and utilities (gas and electricity). Flood defence is considered elsewhere.
- Community infrastructure – This includes health and social facilities, schools, cemeteries, open space and play space (considered elsewhere), community halls, etc. It is generally provided by the public and voluntary sectors.

2.9.2 The main driver of the requirements for infrastructure is the combination of housing and population growth. The main issues in respect of the provision of the necessary infrastructure in order to support that growth are funding and phasing. Key to the provision of appropriate infrastructure will be partnership working with the providers.

2.9.3 Where current infrastructure is inadequate to meet the needs of new development, developers will be required to fund new or improved infrastructure that is directly related to those needs. This is especially important when considering proposed large-scale allocations of housing land but equally applies to small-scale development proposals across the district. Already during the Local Development Framework process the following providers have indicated that developer funding will be necessary if standards are to be maintained – transport, education, primary health care, police and play/open space.

### **Available Options**

2.9.4 None have been considered. There is an expectation in government and regional guidance that developer contributions are a means towards achieving infrastructure and that Local Development Frameworks indicate the circumstances in which they will be sought and the priorities to be achieved.

### **COMMUNITY WELL BEING Physical & Community Infrastructure**

- Q47 Should the Council be looking to identify a set of local priorities for which developer contributions will be sought? YES/NO
- Q48 If YES, how would you define “local” and what would you consider the priorities to be?

## **LOCAL SERVICES**

### **Draft Objective 16 Local Services**

**To promote better access for every member of the community – particularly younger and older people, those who are disadvantaged, those in remote rural areas, and families – to housing, employment, services and facilities.**

**In doing so to encourage the retention of appropriate local services including post offices and shops in villages and district centres**

- 2.9.5 The Council recognises the value of local services, particularly to rural residents and those with restrictions on mobility due to age, health or the simple lack of a car.
- 2.9.6 Access to local services is an issue that has frequently arisen during consultation. Not every household has access to a car. The basic facilities have been identified as:
- A general shop.
  - Post Office.
  - Pub.
  - Primary School.
  - Meeting place.

Table 7 Provision of Facilities

<b>Number of Villages</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Change</b>
With none of the 5 facilities	17	20	+3
With 1 of the facilities	20	17	-3
With 2 of the facilities	24	31	+7
With 3 of the facilities	16	7	-9
With 4 of the facilities	16	16	-
With all 5 facilities	11	13	+2

- 2.9.7 In the last four years, the number of villages that do not have any of the five facilities has increased.
- 2.9.8 In many cases it may not be viable to locate new or retain existing facilities in some of the smaller rural settlements. Where this happens, access to the market towns or key service centres becomes vital.

### **COMMUNITY WELL-BEING Retention of Local Services**

Q49 Do you think the Council could do more through the Local Development Framework to protect the retention of existing local services? YES/NO

Q50 If YES, what other measures can you suggest?

## **SPORT AND LEISURE**

### **Draft Objective 17 Leisure**

**To ensure that the community is as healthy as possible by providing/promoting opportunities for it to live a healthy lifestyle.**

**In particular to meet the needs of younger people, including providing them with opportunities to contribute to the development and delivery of services and activities to meet their needs.**

- 2.9.9 Both the Council, through its corporate strategies, and the Local Strategic Partnership through the Community Strategy, promote the concept of healthy communities. One of the ways of achieving this, and hence an important role for the Local Development Framework, is to ensure the provision of areas for sport and recreation.

## **PLAY SPACE**

- 2.9.10 .10 Play space can be broken down into the two elements of play areas for children's use (including equipped playgrounds and casual kick-about areas) and sports grounds for youth and adult use (including pitches, greens and courts). There are national standards for the provision of such play space, related to population size. The Council has carried out an audit of all facilities in every community and identified deficiencies. This was done in consultation with the communities themselves.
- 2.9.11 An Option for this Plan may be to consider whether, given the age structure of the population, more specific provision should be made for older people.

## **GREEN SPACE**

- 2.9.12 It is widely accepted that green open spaces are an essential resource in creating an agreeable quality of life. This is particularly important within urban environments where parks and open spaces can be wildlife havens, places for quiet relaxation, places for healthy exercise or focal points for community interaction. Green open spaces also contribute to the character of any urban or rural settlement. Green space can not only include parks but also open spaces, commons, 'green corridors', and areas of ecological interest over which there is public access.

### **COMMUNITY WELL-BEING**

#### **Green Space**

- Q51 Which areas would you wish the Council to identify as important green spaces, in order that they are protected?
- Q52 Do you have adequate access to green space from where you live? YES/NO
- Q53 If NO what more could be done to improve this situation?



# IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

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## 2.10 Core Strategy Objectives and Indicators

2.10.1 In order to manage and review the Local Development Framework (LDF) policies, it will be necessary to develop a robust set of indicators that will check whether the policies and allocations are being met. Monitoring provides information on the performance of policy, the delivery of development and subsequent impacts upon the environment. The LDF monitoring process will help to ensure that the Council maintains a set of plans and policies that remain sound and relevant to achieving the set objectives.

2.10.2 The Council is required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report for the LDF at the end of each calendar year. This allows the collection of information and analysis regarding the progress/implementation of the LDF to be continuously and transparently maintained. The Government has produced a good practice guide to the monitoring process and the Council has produced a monitoring framework for the LDF based upon this guidance and following types of indicators:

### **Contextual indicators:**

2.10.3 The broad characteristics of the Suffolk Coastal district will be set out through **contextual indicators**. Establishing social, environmental and economic spatial perspectives is vital in achieving sustainable development. These indicators establish an 'area profile' of the district and allow an understanding of the wider context for any locally identified issues. Contextual indicators are also commonly used by other initiatives, for example, the Community Strategy. In particular, the Community Strategy and the LDF will develop a firm relationship to adopt common targets and collect shared indicators where possible and appropriate.

### **Core Output indicators:**

2.10.4 The function of **output Indicators** are to set out quantifiable events that are directly related to, or are a result of, the implementation of the planning policies. It is required for Local Authorities to collect a set of 'Core output Indicators' and these will allow direct and easy comparison between areas.

### **Local Output Indicators:**

2.10.5 **Local output indicators** are related to outputs of policies that are not covered by the Core Indicators above. The collection of local output indicators will be specific to the relevant issues within each Local Authority at the time.

### **Significant Effects Indicators:**

2.10.6 A wide range of indicators covering economic, social and environmental issues is collected as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework process for the LDF. See the SA Objectives and Indicators in the Sustainability Appraisal report for further information. The objectives will act as a basis against which plans and policies can be assessed and the indicators will be used to collect data as to how well the progress for objectives is being achieved.

2.10.7 Whilst all data will be collected where possible for each indicator, there are large number to report and therefore only the most significant positive or negative effects will be published in the Annual Monitoring Report.