

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

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	The Spatial Framework: Achieving a Better Quality of Life	To ensure that development supports the principles of sustainable development and secures sustainable communities
2	Housing: Meeting Housing Needs	To encourage the improved provision of, and access to, appropriate housing to meet existing and future needs.
3	The Economy: Strengthening the Economy	To stimulate a prosperous economy in order to improve the quality of life for the community.
4	Built and Natural Environment: 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	Community Well-Being: 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 19th 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"> • Good range of independent comparison (often tourism related) retailers • Very low vacancy rate (6%) • Moderate accessibility • Attractive environment and important tourist centre <p>Quantitative Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No quantitative need to increase food retailing floorspace <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vital and viable town centre • An attractive and important tourist destination
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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"> • An adequate comparison provision • High number of public houses/takeaway restaurants • High number of vacant units • Relatively good access • Environmental quality in need of enhancement <p>Quantitative assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity for convenience floorspace expansion, but room for qualitative improvements • No clear development opportunities <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A potentially vulnerable centre, lacking a strong tourist trade • A dispersed retail frontage • Recent enhancement scheme of major benefit but still signs of physical dilapidation

- 2.1.56 The **Vision for Leiston** in 2021 is a small town that:
- Has experienced only limited new development in the form of new housing provision, with priority being given to affordable housing to meet local needs;
 - 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;
 - Has retained and expanded its employment base;
 - Has accepted and embraced an incremental improvement in its tourism offer; and
 - 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"> • High proportion of A2 uses/limited range of comparison goods • Reasonably low (and falling) vacancy rate • Easily accessible by road, rail and bus services • A generally attractive built environment <p>Quantitative assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience goods - capacity for further floorspace • Comparison floorspace could be increased <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While Saxmundham has low unit vacancies: it could be a vulnerable retail environment • There is need for investment to enhance the area
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- 2.1.66 The **Vision for Saxmundham** in 2021 is that of a small market town that:
- a) 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;
 - b) 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"> • Good comparison and convenience representation • A diverse and strong independent retail sector, vital to the town • Retail rents rising strongly in last 6 years • Low vacancy level but an increasing one • Accessibility is generally good • An excellent environmental quality <p>Quantitative assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience goods - limited capacity for additional floorspace • Comparison goods - capacity for further floorspace, assuming a high market share is maintained (recent developments may have created this) <p>Overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An attractive, vital and viable market town, performing well

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?