

5. SCENARIO 2: MODERATE GROWTH

ASSUMPTIONS

5.01 The 'moderate growth' approach assumes that:

- The peninsula accepts a share of new housing development allocated to Suffolk Coastal District Council as part of the Haven Gateway. The major part of the new housing can be accommodated on brownfield and windfall sites, and the requirement for greenfield land is minimised. New housing development of this scale is already justified by local work/home imbalance and is not reliant on further Port expansion.
- Housing development is not in balance with any increases in local employment. It simply addresses an element of the current imbalance. The Ipswich fringe will be the prime location for development and Felixstowe will receive 'a modest share'.
- The draft East of England Plan (December 2004) suggests that the part of Suffolk Coastal District which falls within the Haven Gateway should provide a net increase in dwellings of 7,050 over the period 2001-2021. After deducting identified brownfield and windfall sites from this figure, SCDC will seek locations for a further 500 dwellings in Felixstowe.
- No major new employment initiatives and no new allocations of employment land; currently allocated land is developed mostly for Port related activities.
- Increased potential for the town centre retail offer through an expanded or new convenience store and some capacity for additional comparison shopping.
- Improvements to rail connections only occur in relation to Port Expansion.

- The decline in school rolls is stemmed by this level of development, though surpluses will remain.
- Modest resources are available for investment in the town as a resort, but they need to be clearly focused to achieve best effect.

COMPONENTS

5.02 The 'moderate growth' scenario comprises:

- Some 500 homes (1250 people) (approximately) in addition to the original 311 in scenario one, over the period 2001 to 2021, including in the region of 150 affordable homes, a gross development area of some 26 ha.
- The combination of the growth proposed in scenario one and the additional growth in scenario two could result in the development of **700-900 new homes – approximately 1600-2200 people.**
- No major new employment initiatives and no new allocations of employment land; currently allocated land is developed, mostly for Port related activities
- The development of 15.6 ha (net) of employment land at the Blofield / Clickett Hill site and the Haven Exchange site.
- Improved town centre offer through additional convenience retailing and some additional comparison floorspace. The focus for retail should be to consolidate the retail uses in the core town centre area, combined with new local facilities in larger new housing developments. We propose the reconfiguration and expansion of the existing 'Solar' Store to take into account the findings of CBRE's Retail Study (August 2003). Reconfiguration of the land bounded by Hamilton Road, St Andrews Road and High Road West. Drawing number EED001-11: 'Foodstore Reconfiguration' illustrates a possible approach to master planning the area. We suggest that the redevelopment of the site is best sought through discussion and negotiation with existing land owners resulting in the development of a Supplementary Planning Document or Area Action Plan. **The consultant team have not**

discussed the potential reconfiguration of the store with the Co-operative.

- A key component of the improved retail offer would be a modest foodstore which would anchor the local centre in the regeneration of South Felixstowe. This should be a local store as opposed to a large food store which would dominate the local environment and would attract customers from beyond the local catchment. The local centre could be located on at the front of the Beach Station site, on the northern edge of the South Seafront site, or on the front edge of the Ordnance Roundabout site. All of these locations would allow the local centre to sit centrally in the heart of the regeneration of South Felixstowe, and would enable equal access from existing and proposed residential areas. See plans EED001/07 & EED001/08.
- A new, expanded secondary school and closure of one existing school.
- Modest additional funds for infrastructure and amenity investment;
- Tourism initiatives that target quality and speciality short breaks – regional level conferences, nature breaks (wildlife, etc), art, golf, etc;
- A strategy for the improvement of Felixstowe’s public realm has been identified. This is explored in greater detail in Appendix C. This is a vital facet in raising Felixstowe’s image and reinvigorating the tourism sector. This scenario is likely to fund and enable significant changes to the public realm.

IMPLICATIONS

5.03 The implications of this scenario are:

- Continued popularity as a retirement destination continues to exert an upward pressure on house prices as demand outstrips supply. This is moderated by the development of new affordable housing, particularly for key workers.

- The development of employment land by businesses who are not related to the Port is likely to be limited and slow, which will not help to diversify the economic base.
- Secondary education is consolidated into one new school. One or more primary schools may close. However, secondary education may well benefit from the “Schools for the Future” initiative which could deliver a well equipped and modern new school for the Peninsula. With the new development the school will be towards the top of the ideal size range for secondary schools in Suffolk, precluding further development and growth in the future unless: household sizes continue to fall sharply; adequate provision is made for school expansion, even if the ideal size range is breached; post-16 education is provided elsewhere in the town or in Ipswich.
- Tourism stabilises. Concentration of available resources on key projects together with high quality on the South Seafront site and regeneration of the gardens and links to the town centre increases the numbers of short stay and day visitors.
- The focus of new development and growth within the general sub region will be in Ipswich but satellite towns benefit by offering choice.
- A more viable town centre encouraging investment and new business.
- Existing levels of deprivation remain and could become worse, manifested in: health deprivation across the board as facilities and staff quality and numbers decline; limited local opportunities for employment that remain low-waged.

BENEFITS

5.04 The potential benefits of the “Moderate Growth” scenario are:

- Limited encroachment onto greenfield development land
- A modest strengthening of the population
- Potential modest reduction in in-commuting

- No worsening of capacity of the transport links to or within the town centre, due to improvements to infrastructure partially funded by development
- New school investment to consolidate the surplus capacity into one or more new schools
- Improved town centre retail provision

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

5.05 The moderate growth scenario assumes the possibility of 690-890 new homes. This would comprise the development of a further 500 dwellings (approximately) in addition to the 311 dwellings identified in Scenario One. These sites comprise:

| SCENARIO 2 | | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Site Name | Site Type | Gross site area (hectares) | Quantity of net residential units at density levels of 30-50 dph |
| Convalescent Hill | Brownfield | 0.51 | 13-20 |
| Ordnance Roundabout | Brownfield | 2.05 | 52-79 |
| Peewit and Felixstowe Beach Caravan Parks | Brownfield | 12.54 | 320-482 |
| South Seafront | Brownfield | 7.08 | 158 |
| Land at Beach Station Road | Brownfield | 1.47 | 50 |
| The Convent, Orwell Road | Brownfield | 1.19 | 60 |
| Land north of Recreation Lane | Brownfield | 0.42 | 19 |
| Land at Old Hall Farm, High Road East | Brownfield | 0.75 | 24 |
| Scenario 2 TOTAL | | 26.01 | 696-892 |

Scenario 2

Scenario 1

5.06 The location of development for the moderate growth scenario is illustrated on master scenarios plan EED001/07 and in detail on plan EED001 / 08.

Regenerating South Felixstowe

- 5.07 The sites identified for development in Scenario Two are purposely all located in the vicinity of South Felixstowe and the seafront, all brownfield urban infill sites which cumulatively could drive the regeneration of South Felixstowe.
- 5.08 The regeneration of this collection of sites would inject new life and vitality into the area. The creation of high quality clusters of new development in and around South Felixstowe would improve the environment of the area, and provide fresh impetus to push forward economic and social improvements too.
- 5.09 Together with the minimal growth scenario locations of the South Seafront and land at Beach Station Road, the focus for development in this 'Moderate Growth' scenario is placed firmly towards Felixstowe's southern wards.
- 5.10 Although other wards in Felixstowe experience some degree of deprivation the wards in South Felixstowe have the worst deprivation in health, employment and skills (see Issues Report: Working Paper 2, pages 14-30, SQW, May 2005). South Felixstowe is the area of greatest deprivation in the town and requires significant intervention to alter the direction of its prevalent socio-economic trends. The South Felixstowe area has the potential to become a vibrant new quarter, with new development (as detailed in the following locations) integrating with the existing communities.
- 5.11 The sites identified in South Felixstowe are valuable brownfield sites located in prime locations close to the seafront, the town centre and have the opportunity to integrate with the existing communities. These valuable sites should be redeveloped with only the highest quality of new development, which raise the environmental quality of the area, improving the area as a both a place to live and a destination. If quality development is delivered on these sites the area is likely to experience the kind of economic uplift which will revitalise this currently neglected part of Felixstowe, yielding social, environmental and economic benefits.

South Seafront

- 5.12 This site must act as a flagship for new development and revitalisation in South Felixstowe. It is hoped that the now permitted Bloor Homes scheme for South Seafront will meet the aspirations for the site and deliver a high quality new development to provide a much needed boost and uplift to the South Felixstowe area.
- 5.13 The South Seafront site is subject to a number of restrictions which limit the extent of development which is possible on the site. These restrictions include;
- The need to maintain a 30m set back for development from the floodwall
 - English Heritage require an area of protection around the Martello Tower
- 5.14 The site restrictions and the inclusion of car parking (262 spaces) and an element of public open space (including a play area) are conditions which will limit the quantity of new homes on the site to 158 homes (including 16 for social housing). With less than one third of the site used for residential development the Bloor Homes scheme should make a positive contribution in provision of quality public realm, improving the environmental conditions in South Felixstowe.

Locations for redevelopment in Scenario 2: Moderate Growth

- 5.15 The Peewit & Felixstowe Beach Caravan Parks, Convalescent Hill and the Ordnance Roundabout are the sites that emerge as locations for redevelopment in the moderate growth scenario. These sites are all located well within the current boundary of the town and are well related to existing facilities and amenities and the transport network. Details of each of these sites as locations for redevelopment are noted as follows;

The Peewit and Felixstowe Beach Caravan Parks

- 5.16 The Peewit and Felixstowe Beach Caravan Parks offer the opportunity to provide a large number of dwellings on a site which is well connected to transport infrastructure (links to the town and seafront via Walton Avenue, and to the regional transport network via the A14) and well contained by its topographic characteristics (Peewit Hill). The land is well located for access to the town centre and seafront and thus has excellent access to the town centre and the existing facilities, services and transport.
- 5.17 A downside of the reallocation of this land for new housing development is the loss of pitches for holiday caravans with potential consequences for the town as a resort. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that the negative impacts may not be pronounced. Most of the caravans are owned as second homes rather than let to holiday makers. The owners are self contained and make little contribution to local businesses and services through local spending. Redevelopment of these sites may lead to pressure for additional caravan pitches elsewhere, but it is believed that the existing sites at the south end of the seafront, Suffolk Sands holiday park in particular, provide the potential for caravanning holidays to continue in the area and it may also be able to absorb any additional generated demand.
- 5.18 It is reasonable to assume that political will and market forces would prevail over any restrictions emerging from ownership constraints or restrictive covenants.

Convalescent Hill

- 5.19 Although relatively small in size, land at Convalescent Hill is an important and valuable location on the seafront. It is a strategically important location on the lineage of the sea cliff which has the potential to act as a key link site between the town centre on the higher ground and seafront below.

Convalescent Hill – current land uses

- 5.20 The potential of the site is not being realised by the land uses which currently occupy the Convalescent Hill site. A compact surface car park fills the lower part of the site which fronts Undercliff Road West, the promenade and the seafront. The higher part of the site which rises sharply to back onto the Wolsey Gardens route along the top of the sea cliff is filled by wild vegetation, including a number of mature trees. Generally this area of vegetation consists of low value scrub which has spread freely on the steepest part of the site, where the relief contributes to its inaccessibility.
- 5.21 Neither the surface car park or the scrub make best use of such a valuable site, which could, with the right form of development, contribute to improving integration between the seafront and town centre, a partnership which would benefit both areas.

Convalescent Hill – proposed uses

- 5.22 The site is highly accessible being located between the town centre and the seafront, and the three routes that surround the site - Undercliff Road West, Convalescent Hill, Wolsey Gardens). Convalescent Hill is therefore a prime site where only development schemes of the highest quality should be considered. The high accessibility provides a site which could support and sustain a variety of land uses.
- 5.23 The Convalescent Hill site could accommodate a flagship scheme of mixed use development, which could include;
- flexible ground floor units constructed with deeper, robust form to accommodate either retail, leisure or residential uses depending upon demand;
 - upper level residential units with attractive sea views;
 - the potential for a top floor sea view café / restaurant and;
 - car parking provision and access at the rear of the site.

- 5.24 The scheme for the Convalescent Hill site has the opportunity to be bold in its design, utilising the potential of sites relief and making the most of the southern aspect which provides excellent views over the promenade and seafront. The change in relief from Wolsey Gardens down to the seafront should allow for development to rise to between four and five storeys. A final decision on storey height should consider the height necessary to facilitate at grade access to the upper level of the development from Wolsey Gardens on the sea cliff.
- 5.25 If leisure uses can be accommodated on the top floor (café / restaurant with sea views) and the ground floor (retail / leisure) a lift or escalator could be integrated into the scheme to improve links between the two ground levels. This lift access should be accessible to the general public in order to provide a new opportunity to improve access between the town on the high ground and the seafront on the lower ground. Such an access initiative would provide a visitor attraction in its own right and improve access for tourists, shoppers, residents, particularly for the elderly and less able bodied people.
- 5.26 A quality mixed use development on this prime site, should aspire to the highest standards of architectural design and thus would enhance the standard of the seafront street scene and would raise aspirations for the style and quality of future development.

Convalescent Hill – car parking

- 5.27 The development of Convalescent Hill would result in the loss of the Suffolk Coastal District Council owned car park. The car park provides 60 car parking spaces. It is understood that there is sufficient capacity in the town's alternative car parks to meet that displaced by redevelopment of this site.
- 5.28 Further to this the new South Seafront development will provide an additional 262 public car parking spaces which will mitigate the loss of the 60 Convalescent Hill spaces. See Appendix E for more details on car parking.
- 5.29 The potential loss of surface car parking should not stand in the way of such a promising development opportunity which would not only realise the value of such an important site, but it could also contribute to improving the connections between the town and the seafront, which could have wider benefits for the town and its visitors.

The Ordnance Roundabout

5.30 The Ordnance Roundabout is a substantial and key urban location on Garrison Lane and Langer Road. These routes provide good access to the site. The land is currently underutilised compared against its important locational base for South Felixstowe and the town as a whole. Development of the Ordnance Roundabout site is central to integrating the town and the seafront. The urban location is within 5 minutes walking distance of the town centre, and the seafront and thus has excellent access to the town centre and existing facilities, amenities and transport.

Ordnance Roundabout – existing uses

5.31 Current land uses on the Ordnance Roundabout site include the large surface car park, the disused former bus station, a council yard, a small business unit and slither of vegetation which occupies the steeper ground which rises up in bunding form at the rear of the site which backs onto the railway line.

5.32 The composition of existing uses around the Ordnance Roundabout amount to little more than a piecemeal collection of unrelated activities. This collection does not make the most of such a strategically important site.

Ordnance Roundabout – potential land uses

5.33 The site could accommodate an innovative high quality development which makes better use of the prime location. Uses could include;

- Quality development fronting the Ordnance Roundabout, providing a focus point at a key junction between the town and seafront.
- The development could rise to three-four storeys in height, a scale which would be suitable to context, particularly the grid of streets between Langer Road and Sea Road which accommodate a variety of two-four storey high buildings.
- The development fronting the Ordnance Roundabout and Garrison Lane could include larger unit space on the ground floor which could accommodate retail or office space as the market demands.
- The upper floors could accommodate residential apartments including an appropriate proportion of affordable housing.

- The development set back within the site, away from the main street frontages could also include apartments or a mix of townhouses and terraced property which could create a high quality development at a medium to high density level, as appropriate for a valuable urban infill site.
- Potential inclusion of an element of public car parking, possibly in a decked car park arrangement.

Ordnance Roundabout – access improvements

- 5.34 Development of the Ordnance site could provide the opportunity to create a new access route between the Ordnance Roundabout and the potential urban infill sites of the Peewit and Felixstowe Beach caravan sites (identified for as potential locations for new housing development in scenario 2). The route would have to negotiate the railway line which separates the two sites, but if a tunnel or bridge could be used to cross the rail line then the caravan sites could be connected to the Ordnance and thus be integrated with the routes to the seafront and the town centre. This would improve access and movement in South Felixstowe and enhance the viability of the caravan sites as potential housing development sites.
- 5.35 Initial proposals for access arrangements are explored in Appendix F.

Ordnance Roundabout – car parking

- 5.36 Development of The Ordnance Roundabout would result in the loss of public car parking spaces. An alternative location for these displaced car parking spaces will be required.
- 5.37 The South Seafront scheme will provide 262 new public car parking places which will go some way to mitigate the lost places at the Ordnance. The Ordnance site has the capacity to accommodate some new reconfigured public car parking too, either in a smaller surface car park or in a new decked car park arrangement.
- 5.38 In a worse case scenario of losing all the public car parking spaces at the Ordnance (107 spaces) and Convalescent Hill (60 spaces) to new development a total of 167 spaces would be displaced. The combined loss is more than compensated by the provision of 262 new spaces in the new South Seafront development, without considering any additional parking provision in the potential new developments at the Ordnance and Convalescent Hill.

- 5.39 Whilst car parking is an important function, it should not be allowed to stand in the way of positive future development which could benefit the wider town and South Felixstowe in particular.
- 5.40 Studies indicate that The Ordnance car park is commonly used to only half capacity (see Appendix E – SCDC statistics and consultant figures) with the exception of when the Sea Road ‘Open Market’ is operating (on Sunday’s and Bank Holidays).

A Local Centre for South Felixstowe

- 5.41 The quantity of redevelopment proposed in the areas around South Felixstowe, on the aforementioned sites, is sufficient to generate the need for and to support a new local centre.
- 5.42 The local centre could provide a focus for uniting the new development with the existing community in South Felixstowe.
- 5.43 The possibility of developing a small local centre in this location should be considered in greater detail. As a minimum this might comprise a small local food store and health centre (doctors and dentists). The land required by the local centre would have a small impact on the overall housing numbers anticipated by this scenario, or the higher growth scenarios.
- 5.44 Potential locations for the small local centre include;
- On the part of former **Beach Station site**, at the front of the site addressing Beach Station Road and the rest of South Felixstowe. This location could also serve the Port.
 - Within the **South Seafront site**, on the key corner of Langer Road / Orford Road (proposed car park in the Bloor scheme), providing a prominent frontage and access from the existing communities of South Felixstowe.
 - On the **Ordnance Roundabout Site**, fronting the roundabout, a prominent site with good accessibility from South Seafront. If local centre uses are considered for this site they should be restricted to smaller units for a local store and potentially a small local health centre as opposed to a larger format food store which would dominate the site, reduce the land available for valuable housing development and create a lower quality built form environment.