



East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Station Road,  
Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1RT

# Full Council

Members: All Councillors

Members are invited to a **Meeting of the Full Council**  
to be held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton  
on **Wednesday, 22 February 2023 at 6.30pm**

This meeting will be broadcast to the public via the East Suffolk YouTube  
Channel at <https://youtu.be/5h6CIPHkgl5>

An Agenda is set out below.

## Part One – Open to the Public

Pages

- 
- 1 Apologies for Absence**  
To receive apologies for absence, if any.

**2      Declarations of Interest**

Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of interests, and the nature of that interest, that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the Meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.

**3      Minutes**

**1 - 31**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2023.

**4      Announcements**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman, the Leader of the Council, members of the Cabinet, or the Chief Executive, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.1(e).

**5      Questions from the Public**

No questions have been submitted by the electorate as provided by Council Procedure Rule 8.

## 6 Questions from Members

The following questions from Members have been submitted in pursuance of Council Procedure Rule 9:

a) Question submitted by Councillor Janet Craig to Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, IT and Operational Partnerships

100 car parking spaces in Sudbury and Stowmarket have been covered in solar panels to help power two Council owned Leisure Centres and provide Electric Vehicle charging points for Leisure Centre users, providing a useful income stream. This was achieved using part funding from two Government schemes.

This sounds like a positive move to support not only residents but also the visitor economy, so what is there to prevent this Council from following the example from colleagues in Babergh & Mid-Suffolk, and applying to these two sources of grant funding (Getting Building Fund and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme). We could then do something similar at our Leisure Centres, and also potentially expand the existing EV provision at other Council premises?

b) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor Richard Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing

Your Housing Strategy 2017 to 2023 aimed to increase our council house stock from 4,479 to 5,200. How is that coming along?

c) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor Norman Brooks, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport

Four years ago, you agreed to apply for a resident's parking scheme in Southwold. How is that coming along?

d) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor Letitia Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism

Community transport is great for the retired, but working age people and the young need buses operating all day. Rural transport was the number one priority when Community Partnerships were set up three years ago. It was still number one at last month's rural "ease the squeeze" workshop. How is that coming along?

e) Question submitted by Councillor Caroline Topping for Councillor Steve Gallant, Leader of the Council

I am pleased to see that the government are now supplying the extra funding to cover the costs incurred by the new regulations around voters needing to supplying photo ID at the next elections and onwards. What will be the new 'set up' of the polling stations bearing in mind this additional work? By set up I mean numbers of staff, how the actual environment will be arranged, how the information will be asked for and what will happen if the voter does not have the ID.

f) Question submitted by Councillor Peter Byatt for Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

A two-page advertisement from Nuclear Waste Services was published In the Lowestoft Journal of 3rd February 2023, seeking possible locations for a Geological Disposal Facility. What stance does this Administration intend to take on the possibility of Nuclear Waste being buried underground in our District?

g) Question submitted by Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte for Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management

Many local authorities in England are deciding to drop the questionable practice of allowing the submission of duplicate planning applications which, perhaps deliberately, confuses communities and obfuscates the consultation process. When will East Suffolk Council follow suit?

## **7 Petitions**

No petitions have been received as provided by Council Procedure Rule 10.



## 8 Notices of Motion

The following Motion has been submitted in pursuance of Council Procedure Rule 11:

Saving our Coastal Communities

Proposer: Councillor David Beavan, Seconder: Councillor Tom Daly

This Council Notes:

- Following the likely implementation of the Second Homes 100% premium, it is anticipated that the council tax income resulting from the 4,096 second homes in East Suffolk will increase East Suffolk Council revenue by well over £700k. We acknowledge that the exact figure will be dependent on customer behaviour.
- The Second Homes 100% premium is also anticipated to increase council tax income of £5.85m for the Suffolk County Council and £1m for the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner.
- That Norfolk County Council have previously given a portion of the council tax they collected on second homes back to the District Council to fund local regeneration and community projects. North Norfolk District Council's November Cabinet recommended that if this premium is introduced, 'the additional income would be ring-fenced for affordable housing'[1], using new council tax to protect their communities.

This Council resolves to:

- Explore the option of ringfencing this additional income to fund Community Land Trusts to provide local social housing for rent in the wards affected by second homes.
- As per the precedent set by Norfolk County Council, to reach out to Suffolk County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner to explore the possibility of working together to utilise the entire increase in council tax income to provide local social housing.

[1] Printed minutes: Agenda for Council on Wednesday 16th November 2022, 6pm.

9	<b>General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24 ES/1457</b> Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources	32 - 145
10	<b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2023/24 to 2026/27 ES/1458</b> Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing	146 - 178
11	<b>Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 ES/1459</b> Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources	179 - 206

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>12 Appointment of Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer ES/1445</b> Report of the Leader of the Council.	<b>207 - 211</b>
<b>13 Halesworth and Oulton Neighbourhood Plans ES/1461</b> Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management	<b>212 - 407</b>
<b>14 Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Reports to Council ES/1446</b> Report of the Leader of the Council.	<b>408 - 420</b>

## **Part Two – Exempt/Confidential**

### **Pages**

There are no Exempt or Confidential items for this Agenda.

**Close**



Chris Bally, Chief Executive

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<p><b>Unconfirmed</b></p>
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Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Council** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Wednesday, 25 January 2023 at 6:30 pm**

**Members present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Alison Cackett, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Tess Gandy, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Chris Mapey, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor Mick Richardson, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles

**Officers present:**

Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Chris Bing (Head of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Phil Harris (Strategic Communications and Marketing Manager), Teresa Howarth (Principal Environmental Health Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Sue Meeken (Labour Political Group Support Officer), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Isabel Rolfe (GLI Political Group Support Officer), Heather Tucker (Head of Housing), Amber Welham (Finance Business Partner - Housing), Paul Wood (Head of Economic Development and Regeneration), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Judy Cloke, Tony Cooper, Janet Craig, Mike Deacon, Tess Gandy, Richard Kerry, Frank Mortimer, Trish Mortimer, Mark Newton, Russ Rainger, Keith Robinson and Kay Yule.

Although apologies had been given, Councillor Tess Gandy arrived during the Announcements at 6.40 pm.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### **3 Minutes**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Meeting held on 23 November 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **4 Announcements**

#### **The Chairman of the Council**

##### SCC Councillor Graham Newman

The Chairman was saddened to report that after a short illness, County and Felixstowe Town Councillor Graham Newman, died in the St Elizabeth Hospice on 28 December. She asked all Members to join her in sending sincerest condolences to his wife, Jan, and to his family.

Graham worked tirelessly in his support of the Local Government family. He was also a hardworking, honourable man and his passing was a great loss, not only to his family, but to all who knew him.

He had served with distinction as County Councillor for Felixstowe Coastal since 2005. He was Chairman of the County Council in 2020/21. He served on the Felixstowe Town Council since 2009, becoming mayor in 2014/15, and again in 2018/19.

Members then held a few moments of respect for Councillor Graham Newman.

##### Full Council on 23 November 2022 – Motion about Water Quality Issues

The Chairman stated that Members would remember that Councillor Byatt had submitted a Motion to the last Full Council meeting on 23 November 2022, regarding concerns about water quality issues and sewage leaks. The Motion was amended at the meeting and Members had voted unanimously to support it.

As a result, the Chairman had written to Peter Simpson, Chief Executive of Anglian Water, and to Therese Coffey, the Environment Secretary and MP for Suffolk Coastal, to call for urgent action to address the situation. This had been reported upon in the East Anglian Daily Times and the Chairman stated that she would update Members when she had received formal responses from Peter Simpson and Therese Coffey.

##### Chairman's Events:

Since the last meeting, the Vice Chairman had attended the following events:

- UCI Masters Cyclo-Cross at Trinity Park, Ipswich on 2, 3 and 4 December 2022
- West Suffolk Civic Carol Service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral on 5 December 2022
- Mayor of Felixstowe's Civic Carol Service at St Andrew's Church on 16

## **Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council**

### Members Allowances

As Members would be aware, Members Allowances were linked to the National Pay Agreement for local government officers. As such, following discussions between the Group Leaders, it had been agreed that a 5% increase would be applied to Members Basic Allowances and the Special Responsibility Allowances. This had been implemented in the December 2022 pay run.

The Leader stated that he had also instructed that a meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel be convened, early in the new Administration, to review Members Allowances. During their usual review, he would, at the request of the two other political Group Leaders, ask them to consider the following 2 questions:

1. Is there a way to seek to provide a more flexible way of paying the allowance, to better support members that need the money, rather than a blanket payment level to all?
2. Is there a way to link allowance payments to the level of Councillors work undertaken?

The Independent Remuneration Panel would undertake their review in due course and their recommendations would be brought back to Full Council, for consideration, during 2023/24.

### Changes to Committee Membership

Following discussions within the Labour Group, it has been decided that, with effect from 16 December 2022 that:

- Councillor Tess Gandy would replace Councillor Louise Gooch on the Audit and Governance Committee
- Councillor Louise Gooch would replace Councillor Tess Gandy on the Scrutiny Committee

## **Cabinet Members**

### Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

#### The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund had recently awarded East Suffolk Council £2.75

million, which would be used to support High Streets, local businesses, the workforce and community skills development, as well as to support those affected by the cost of living crisis.

It was noted that the grants were alive and accessible for bids now, which included:

East Suffolk High Street Improvement Grant Scheme  
East Suffolk Events, Arts and Culture Grant Scheme  
East Suffolk Field to Fork Grant Scheme  
East Suffolk Warm Room Grant Scheme

It was hoped that there would be another 5 grant schemes announced during the year and further information would be provided when it was available.

### **Chief Executive**

There was no announcement from the Chief Executive.

N.B. Councillor Gandy arrived during this item at 6.40 pm.

## **5 Questions from the Public**

No questions have been submitted by the electorate as provided by Council Procedure Rule 8.

## **6 Questions from Members**

a) Question submitted by Councillor Caroline Topping to Councillor Steve Gallant, Leader of the Council

Would the Leader agree that when a Councillor is elected by the people to represent them and their ward, they should make every effort to attend as many meetings as possible to those committees, etc that they have been selected to sit on (more than the bare minimum) and especially the 10 'Full Council' meetings that are scheduled a year? There are Councillors who have not attended a 'Full Council' meeting for an entire calendar year, have only attended virtual Cabinet meetings or a Planning meeting (where they are not the nominated members, have attended as visitors and have no voting rights). I think when people elect a councillor to represent them it is with the expectation that they will be represented and as fully as possible.

Response from Cllr Steve Gallant, Leader of the Council

Thank you, Councillor Topping, for the somewhat surprising Question.

Attending meetings and indeed participating in debate is an important part of Councillor duties but it is, of course, not the only important thing that they do. A full role description is provided in the Constitution, which I am sure Councillor Topping is both aware of and familiar with.

But just for clarity, some of those other things include.....

- \* Acting as a bridge between the community and the Council.
- \* Representing individual constituents and local organisations in a fair and equal way.
- \* Undertaking casework on resident's behalf.
- \* Representing the interests of the Ward and communities they serve.

Some Members have health and / or personal issues that prevent them attending as many meetings as others, some have work commitments that prevent them carrying out as much Community involvement as others.

In respect of attendance at meetings, some members attend many meetings but remain silent.

Councillor Topping will recognise that some Councillors attend the start of meetings but troop out en masse, before the meeting is concluded, in order to catch a train. Often missing out on debating very important matters presented in the later part of the meetings.

Councillor Topping will also recognise that some members storm out of meetings when they hear something they don't like during a debate.

The electorate decide on the Councillor they want to represent them. This is democracy in action. If they are dissatisfied with the efforts of their Councillors, then they will I'm sure make their feelings known at the ballot box.

I am unsure of the motivation for the question posed this evening – but I find it disingenuous and indeed inaccurate to suggest that the Member posing the question is herself beyond potential criticism.

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor Topping

My question is not political, I feel that all Councillors should be expected to attend the scheduled Full Council meetings each year. Can we ask the Audit and Governance Committee to look at the Constitution and close the loophole that allows Members to attend one meeting, virtually, every 6 months?

#### Response from Councillor Gallant

No.

#### b) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment

Currently the 2017 Clean Growth Strategy is not on target to improve all homes to EPC rating C or above by 2035. Can you confirm whether the Warm Home scheme is limited to households that have a combined gross income of less than £30,000 and do not have gas central heating, and as a result what percentage of households in East Suffolk are not covered by your scheme? How do you plan to help these households reduce their energy bills and carbon emissions to meet our target of net zero by 2030?



Response from Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment

First, I would like to clear up a misunderstanding. The 2017 Green Growth Strategy is a Central Government strategy not an East Suffolk one, although its aim supports our environment vision over a society reduction in carbon footprint, individual household emissions reduction does not contribute to ESC's net zero target.

The Warm Homes Suffolk scheme takes Government funding distributed under the Green Homes Fund. You will be pleased to know Suffolk has been successful in securing funds under the previous 4 phases of this funding and is optimistic that we will be awarded funding in the next phase.

Not being on the gas network or the maximum £30,000 gross household income are parameters set by national government, they are not a local decision.

Schemes to directly support individual households are typically delivered at a county and national level. This is due to the scale of funding and resource involved. Therefore, the focus of District Councils is predominately on those households that qualify for schemes such as Warm Homes Suffolk and our HRA property programme, which are both significant projects. I certainly recognise a number of households are excluded from national schemes, therefore, through our initiatives, in particular our outreach work through the Greenprint Forum, we work hard to connect householders with energy efficiency advice centres and grants when they become available.

Carbon reduction across the UK will only be achieved when we all work together to reduce our footprint.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Beavan

The Scrutiny Committee last week recommended to your Environment Task Group that we need an accelerated programme for our own housing, to reduce our carbon emissions by 2030, which is our current policy. We have more than 1,000 homes below EPC C but we are retrofitting less than 20 a year, so it will take 50 years at the present rate. Landlords will not be allowed to let privately with an EPC below C in three years time, according to the Government plans.

Lord Foster of Bath, speaking in the Lords just before Christmas, said, " My own Council, East Suffolk, was recently approached by researchers from Warwick University, who offered free support to identify clusters of housing where retrofit work would be easily scalable. Although the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Councillors on the Council proposed taking this initiative forward, it was very sadly blocked by the majority Conservative group. I hope the Minister might look into why his colleagues in East Suffolk did that."

So how will you explain to the Minister that we are on target?

Response from Councillor Gallant

Councillor Gallant took the opportunity to clarify that the matter was debated and voted upon correctly by Full Council at the last meeting in November. Members were all entitled to take part in the debate. The rationale for voting down the Motion was provided and the decision was made.

c) Question submitted by Councillor David Beavan for Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

As requested, I have supplied you with a full copy of the original 1509 will of William Godyll which bequeathed Havenbeach Marsh to the people of Southwold. Please can you answer my original question, and tell the council what the legal basis is for your transfer of the ownership of the camping field from the Harbour Lands and Southwold Town Council to East Suffolk District Council as evidenced in the pictures of our GIS asset map (to be emailed to all councillors)?

Response from Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

Councillor Beavan had already received a response from the Council's Lawyer regarding his claims. I would not normally see the need to read this out at Full Council, however, as Councillor Beavan has distributed a leaflet calling us thieves, it would benefit all to know the response. The Council's Lawyer replied:

'Your question raises interesting points. You have said this goes back to the original will of William Godell. I have looked at the will in the past and whilst this is of some historic interest, it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the extent of the lands that were the subject of the initial bequest let alone state with any degree of confidence the amount of land that remains in the current day. Based on current research there is a suggestion that the only land remaining from the original bequest is effectively the land known as Southwold Common which seems to be owned by the Southwold Common Trust being a registered charity. When the land was first bequeathed it went to the wife of William Godell and upon her death it passed to the Bailiffs and Commonalty of Southwold who had power to sell or give land according to their judgement. I think it is impossible for anyone to now be able to state what land is left from the original bequest but there would seem to be no direct sustainable evidence that the camping field is part of this land now. I would however be interested to learn if you believe that you have any documentary evidence to support an argument that this land was and remains part of the Godell legacy.

Turning to the point raised regarding the transfer of ownership of the camping field from the Harbour Lands and Southwold Town Council to East Suffolk Council, this could not have happened since it is acknowledged that the camping field has never formed part of the harbour lands.

The harbour lands, which include the caravan park, are now owned by East Suffolk Council following the Local Government Act 1972 devolutions that took effect in 1974 and I do not believe that there is any argument over this.

As far as the camping field is concerned, whilst this is not registered at the Land Registry, it seems clear that as East Suffolk Council and Waveney DC before them have

used this land as part of the overall caravan and camping site and have been in control of it and in receipt of the rents and profits from the same since 1974, there is sufficient legal argument that the land belongs now to East Suffolk Council but this is as a result of acts of ownership, not as a result of any purported transfer which I can say once again, has not happened.

You are, I am sure, fully appreciative of the fact that all income derived from this land as well as the adjoining harbour land/caravan park is invested into the management of the harbour which clearly is a benefit to the Southwold.'

#### Supplementary Question from Councillor Beavan

So, you are claiming squatters' rights but you cannot legally do that on charitable land. The Harbour Management Committee has agreed that ESC should not extract profit from the Harbour by charging rent for land they claim to own, so there is no financial benefit.

You have just upset the new Harbour Revision Order process and shown ESC in a very poor light to the people of Southwold, recalling all the years that Waveney extracted millions from our harbour. Put the map back to where it was, with the boundary in its rightful place and let us move on.

#### Response from Councillor Rivett

I will repeat a point that I made to Councillor Beavan at the last Full Council meeting, that this is another attempt to create mistrust between Southwold and ESC. He should have realised by now, as demonstrated by the Harbour Management Committee, that this is not going to work.

The question to be answered is for Members of the GLI - do they think it's appropriate for their Leader to not only call the Council thieves but, in the same newsletter, allege that the Southwold Town Mayor and the Clerk were involved with - in his words - "a nod and a wink". That's members of the community he is supposed to represent. I received a phone call from a long-time resident of Southwold yesterday about this subject and he wanted to tell me how disgusted he was that Councillor Beavan could make such claims against the Clerk of the Town Council. Members of the GLI, is that behaviour you're going to support?

#### d) Question submitted by Councillor Janet Craig to Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, IT and Operational Partnerships

100 car parking spaces in Sudbury and Stowmarket have been covered in solar panels to help power two Council owned Leisure Centres and provide Electric Vehicle charging points for Leisure Centre users, providing a useful income stream. This was achieved using part funding from two Government schemes.

This sounds like a positive move to support not only residents but also the visitor economy, so what is there to prevent this Council from following the example from colleagues in Babergh & Mid-Suffolk, and applying to these two sources of grant

funding (Getting Building Fund and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme). We could then do something similar at our Leisure Centres, and also potentially expand the existing EV provision at other Council premises?

As Councillor Craig had given apologies for the meeting, the Chairman stated that this question would be taken to the next Full Council meeting scheduled for 22 February 2023.

## **7 Petitions**

No petitions have been received as provided by Council Procedure Rule 10.

## **8 Notices of Motion**

The Chairman reported that 2 Notices of Motion had been accepted for this meeting. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.4, the Leader of the Council and the Leaders of the Opposition Groups had met to discuss the 2 Motions and agree a way forward. A consensus could not be found, therefore, Full Council would need to decide and vote upon whether to discuss the Motions this evening or refer them on to the Cabinet or a relevant Committee.

The Chairman invited Councillor Daly to read out his Motion.

a) Motion submitted by Councillor Tom Daly, to be seconded by Councillor Louise Gooch

### *Opportunity for a Reset*

*This Council notes:*

1. *That Scottish Power Renewables are explicit that onshore substation construction will not now start until 2024/2025. This affords a window of opportunity to push for a complete reset of approach.*
2. *National Grid Ventures are consulting on proposals to bring new interconnectors ashore to join our electricity grid to Europe. They propose digging single 1.8GW cables into our AONB to feed rural substations and pylons.*
3. *Each windfarm is also queuing for their own connection. It would be more efficient for our communities, the environment, producers and consumers if a national offshore grid was established to connect everything to an area of high demand like London, rather than Suffolk which is a net producer.*
4. *Their sister company, National Grid ESO, is excluding the option of an offshore grid in the consultation.*

*This Council resolves:*

1. *To formally support a change of approach that protects the rural integrity of our villages and countryside now and into the future.*
2. *To write to Graham Stuart MP, the Energy Minister, backing the call from James*

*Cartlidge MP for National Grid ESO to conduct an “independent and open-minded review of offshore options”.*

3. *To write to the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, proposing he consider this review.*

The Chairman invited Councillor Daly to say a few words in support of his Motion.

Councillor Daly stated that time was of the essence, if we were going to halt the industrialisation of swathes of the countryside. There was a window of opportunity for ESC to join the growing demand for a reset of approach to the Friston connection agreements, thereby closing the window on the multiple developments that would follow SPR. However, we need to act now.

Work was not due to start at the Friston site until 2024/25. Changes to those connection agreements were possible by mutual consent. This Motion was a proposal that ESC joined the many voices, both public and parliamentary, to compel National Grid (NG) to make every effort in realising this rational way forward. Conditions had significantly changed since OFGEM instructed NG to find the cheapest options for bringing wind energy onshore, excluding all social and environmental cost and the Friston CAs that resulted. Cumulative impact issues were now explicit and were never consulted on. NG have already indicated the 2030 target was likely to slip to at least 2032. This meant that an Offshore Platform leading to Modular Offshore Grid could now realistically be explored.

This was an opportunity to push for community and environmental costs to be internalised, to leave a truly green legacy, not a semi-industrialised district after our time in office and yet still do our duty to accommodate offshore wind. There was every reason to make this last effort and no reason not to. Please support our communities and countryside and support this Motion.

Councillor Gooch then seconded the Motion and confirmed that she wished to speak at this point in proceedings.

Councillor Gooch began by providing some context to the Motion and by explaining that interconnectors were needed to share electricity between the UK and its European partners. Interconnectors were essential as they allowed for the import and export of renewable, green energy. Currently, wind farms were not connected to this system, therefore, each wind farm would transport the electricity generated onshore, via individual cabling. NG acknowledged that more multi-purpose connectors were needed, to enable wind farms to connect into this wider network of distribution. A study had shown that having such multi-purpose connectors could save consumers £3 - 6 billion and reduce the number of onshore landing points by 50%.

Councillor Gooch reported that a number of local MPs had been campaigning against an assumption in favour of onshore connectors, which they felt would cause irreparable damage to areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs). She quoted MPs who felt that there was no strategic planning in relation to the national grid for the next 50 - 100 years, projects were for a much shorter timescale. Indeed, the development of wind farms was held back by the lack of capacity within NG, therefore, offshore interconnectors could increase the value of offshore windfarms. It was noted

that NG was currently under pressure from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and RSPB regarding the planned pylons for Hintlesham Woods. Councillor Gooch concluded by stating that offshore energy infrastructure should be placed offshore to future proof the system and protect the environment.

The Chairman invited Members to debate the route that this Motion should take, either to be debated by Full Council this evening or referred to the Cabinet or a Committee.

The Leader stated that this Motion was both ignorant of the facts and pure political posturing. The Conservative East Suffolk Council had been unrepentant at getting the best deal for residents and pushing government to see the effects of the energy projects on the district. The Motion demonstrated a complete failure of the Opposition to understand the energy sector and the effects on residents. They stated that the construction of SPR's substation was not until 2024/25 and "this affords a window of opportunity to push for a complete reset of approach" however, SPR have a live and legal planning permission - a DCO - for their project. The delay was only because of the Judicial Review being mounted to the decision and, at the last stage, all 6 grounds of the Judicial Review had been dismissed. A reset, as the proposer described, would require a full re-commencement of the NSIP process, which would take approximately a year, which the developer would not do. The next claim was that "each windfarm was also queuing for their own connection". This was complete rubbish, as each windfarm had a connection offer, before they even started the NSIP process.

The Leader reported that the fantasy of an offshore grid, as explained by experts many times, was not technically possible. Furthermore, the Deputy Leader had explained this again, at a recent Scrutiny Committee meeting, as cable capacities were limited to 2GW. More recently, NG were challenged to explain why the Norwich to Bramford overhead line could not be put out to sea. NG had recently evidenced that seabed cables were far more limited than overhead lines, just one example from their assessment of offshore: the lifetime cost of overhead lines £1.1 billion, offshore multiple cables £7.3 billion and the costs involved were passed onto consumers. This was on top of one suggestion from the Opposition, of an offshore energy island. That project was estimated to cost an eye watering £34 billion, yet another expense for our residents to shoulder.

The Leader stated that this Council had been pushing government to both highlight the concentration of energy projects within our district and change their approach, which had led to the launch of government's Offshore Transmission Network Review – a review of how a more strategic approach to energy projects could be achieved. The proposal to write letters was, again, ignorant of the facts. Last week, the Deputy Leader, whilst in Parliament, took the opportunity to reiterate our current situation with MPs. This Motion isn't helpful to East Suffolk residents, it isn't reality, it's nimbyism to get cheap votes and the proposals they suggest aren't cheap; residents would be left shouldering ever greater energy bills thanks to the GLI. The Leader stated that he saw no benefit in debating the Motion this evening and asked that Members support the proposition that, as set out in paragraph 11.5 of the Constitution, that this Motion be passed to Cabinet for them to continue to engage in this arena. The Leader so proposed, which was duly seconded by Councillor Rivett.

Councillor Rivett stated that the electioneering was clear to see and it was the environment which needed to be protected from the GLI, according to their own press releases. In one such press release, the GLI stated that 'we need localised, low carbon power' and in another, they stated 'we need more projects like Xlinks'. For the benefit of Members, Councillor Rivett explained that Xlinks was a project in Morocco, where the solar panels alone covered 200 km<sup>2</sup>, which was 11 times the size of Lowestoft, and would bring 4 cables ashore to the UK which, when combined, would be larger than the diameter of the earth. Just a month later, they said that there should be a pause on onshore connectors. Their message in the recent Green Newsletter stated that this Council was supportive of the Nautilus Project, when in fact, the Council had raised concerns about the approach taken and a copy of the letter was available on the Council's website.

Councillor Beavan reported that the residents of his ward were flabbergasted to hear that NG proposed to land an electric cable on the eroding shore, to burrow through the marshes and under the rivers and forests, to build a massive substation and then construct more pylons to take the electricity to London. It would be much simpler to integrate all the connections in one offshore grid, running up the Thames Estuary. The electricity was not needed here, however, they need the electricity in London, so they should take it to London. We urgently need to stop this in its tracks, which was why I wrote to James Cartlidge and Therese Coffey to offer a cross party campaign. James replied with his suggestion to Government for an urgent review, which I fully endorse.

Councillor Beavan stated that there was a one year window before Scottish Power started their connection at Friston. Once that happened, all the rest would follow. The people of East Suffolk were looking to us for leadership. Why would we not want to support them and James Cartlidge? Would it be because Opposition Motions were routinely rejected out of hand? Why can't this administration work across party lines for the good of East Suffolk? I urge Members to allow this debate so that we can send a united, resounding NO to NG.

Councillor Gallant stated the Council would continue to engage on this matter, via Councillor Rivett, with full support from the Cabinet. Councillor Rivett knew the situation and was well briefed and knowledgeable about the detailed situation. It would be a waste of time to debate this matter further this evening.

Upon being put to the vote, the vote to refer the Motion to Cabinet was **CARRIED**.

The Chairman invited Councillor Byatt to read out his Motion.

b) Motion Submitted by Councillor Peter Byatt, seconded by Councillor Louise Gooch

*This Council notes that:*

*On 23rd November 2022 this Council approved a Motion regarding sewage pollution flowing untreated into our local waterways and coastal waters.*

*As a brief reminder, we agreed that a letter should be written to Anglian Water asking for a number of actions to be taken to address this and related issues as a matter of*

*urgency. In addition it was also decided to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment to ask for our water systems to be protected, and for there to be engagement with all stake-holders to work together to improve water quality across East Anglia.*

*On December 22nd (conveniently timed just before the Christmas period) the Environment Agency announced that their original plans to clean rivers, lakes and coastal waters of sewage and agricultural materials have been moved back from 2027 to 2063 – some 36 years.*

*This Council agreed to write to Anglian Water and the Environment Agency before this unexpected announcement by the Environment Agency.*

*Given this unexpected announcement and lengthy delay, this Council asks:*

*That this matter be discussed at the next Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group on 17th February, which includes all six Council Leaders, their Chief Executives, the Chief Officers of both Clinical Commissioning Groups that cover Suffolk, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Executive and Chair of the New Anglia LEP.*

*That the Group discusses the issue of sewage and other water pollution across the whole of Suffolk, and further ask that the six Leaders write to the Environment Agency and our seven Constituent Members of Parliament, expressing their concern at this serious delay in dealing with such an important matter which affects all of Suffolk's residents and visitors.*

*In addition, given that the Environment Agency are due to publish details of their overall Improvement Plans this month, ask that there be details specifically for Suffolk and East Anglia.*

The Chairman invited Councillor Byatt to speak to his Motion.

Councillor Byatt stated that the Public Sector Leaders Group (PSLG) was made up of powerful people, including the Leaders and Chief Executives of each Council within Suffolk, the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Chairman of the New Anglia LEP. The PSLG was a key body in Suffolk. Their Terms of Reference included: to provide a venue for strategic multi organisational debate on key issues, to resolve differences in strategic matters and to determine a collective lobbying position. If the PSLG could not do as requested by the Motion, as the major players in Suffolk, then who could? The Labour Group were grateful that the Council looked at this issue in November, we know that water quality is a major issue, however, to wait 36 years for improvements was far too long and too late. This was a major issue for our local communities.

Councillor Byatt explained that he had been advised that it was not possible for the Motion to add items on to the PSLG agenda. He asked for assistance with the re-wording of his Motion, to enable the PSLG to consider the matter of water quality at a meeting in the future.

The Chairman asked for a seconder for the Motion.



Councillor Gooch confirmed that she seconded the Motion and that she wished to speak at this point. She stated that the Labour Group had been pushing for improved water quality and the processing of sewage for many years. They had been heartened by co-operative support from all parties and she had been pleased to work with Councillor Mallinder on the Environment Task Group. She stated that this Motion was not particularly political, water quality was integral to public and environmental health and she felt that the Motion did not need to be debated this evening, it could simply be approved and the PSLG asked to consider the matter, at some point in the future. The PSLG were powerful people in our communities and she wanted them to show some leadership on this important matter.

The Chairman invited Members to debate the route that this Motion should take, either to be debated by Full Council this evening or referred to the Cabinet or a Committee.

The Leader stated that he was glad that the Motion was not politically motivated, as everyone should wish to have the best water quality for their communities. He reported that the agendas for Suffolk Public Sector Leaders meetings were populated by items on their Forward Plan and it was not within the gift of this Council to request that items be presented for debate at its formal meetings. If that was the case, they would find themselves at the beck and call of all the constituent Councils, who would be at liberty to bring motions to their respective full Councils, to add items for debate.

The Leader stated that this Council was fortunate to have an excellent Environmental Portfolio Holder, who chaired a very effective and ambitious cross party Task Group. He also sat on a County-wide group which was established under the direction of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders, to look at opportunities where a stronger voice or economies of scale could deliver better environmental outcomes.

As the Environmental Task Group (ETG) was not a formal Committee of the Council, it was not compliant with the Constitution for Full Council to refer the Motion for debate directly to the ETG. The Leader therefore proposed that, as set out in paragraph 11.5 of the Constitution, this Motion be passed to Cabinet for further investigation by the relevant Portfolio Holder, who could discuss the matter at his Environment Task Group and seek to raise the issue with the wider County group. This was duly seconded by Councillor Rivett.

Upon being put to the vote, the vote to refer the Motion to Cabinet was **CARRIED**.

## **9 Suffolk Strategic Approach to Home Energy Efficiency Improvements**

Full Council received a presentation from Teresa Howarth, Principal Environmental Health Officer for Private Sector Housing. In the absence of Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing, the Leader introduced the presentation. The Leader stated that this presentation was being received following questions and debate at both Full Council and Cabinet, and that he hoped the presentation would provide further clarity on the Council's strategic approach to home energy efficiency improvements and how this would support residents.

Teresa Howarth, Principal Environmental Health Officer, summarised the agreement between the Suffolk Councils to work jointly on schemes such as boiler replacement, solar water heating and similar energy efficiency projects. Ms Howarth stated that funding for various schemes came from a variety of external sources, including central government, utilities providers and charities. Funding was stop start in nature which presented a number of challenges for the projects.

Ms Howarth summarised issues around fuel poverty in Suffolk. 14% of total households in Suffolk were in fuel poverty as of 2020, with 35% of located in East Suffolk. As a result of the cost of living crisis, it was estimated that the overall figure would now be closer to 40%. Ms Howarth stated that although there are centres of deprivation, the issue of fuel poverty and low energy efficiency housing was not isolated to these areas.

At present, the Council was working under the 'Warm Homes Suffolk' scheme which was delivering the governments Green Homes Fund - Local Authority Delivery. East Suffolk's role was to provide customer services and contractor liaison. West Suffolk had taken the lead on the bidding for funding in the current phase.

Under this offer, households with a gross total income of less than £30,000, or landlords with tenants whose gross total income was less than £30,000, properties could receive free insulation (including loft, cavity wall, room in the roof) , solar photovoltaics, and in some cases air source heat pumps. Ms Howarth confirmed that there were strict ventilation requirements associated with the insulation.

The Green Homes Grant had been received in phases, and as Suffolk had been successful in bidding at every phase the programme had been able to continue steadily. The biggest issue had been in delivering HUG, the part of the scheme relating to rural, off-gas, areas. This needed to be maximised as funding would be running out shortly.

Moving forward the idea was to consider retrofitting whole houses rather than individual measures as this was more cost effective and houses could be brought up to maximum EPC. However, the level of funding available was not currently sufficient to do this in solid wall, off-gas properties.

Other challenges included contractor capacity, material availability and the level of demand especially in consideration of the cost of living crisis. The marketing for the Warm Homes Suffolk scheme had reached far more people than would usually be reached by Council marketing which also presented challenges. Ms Howarth stated that the checks in household income were also taking time, as they included not only the homeowners or main tenants but also any adult children and required delicate conversations with applicants. The scheme was also constrained by central government rules, which did not necessarily work in all situations. Quality of installation was important, and all installers were Trustmark registered and worked to the PAS retrofit quality standard.

Ms Howarth summarised the new system for funding the project, HUG 2. An allocation of £4.9million had been confirmed, to be spent in each of the next two years. The team would have to adapt to the new system of funding by proposing batches of properties.

There were also additional limits in the scheme depending on the EPC rating of the building, and the scheme would only apply to off-gas properties.

Ms Howarth summarised help for other type of properties, including ECO and ECO plus provided by Energy Companies, although this was quite complicated to apply for. Other funding had been received from Suffolk Public Sector Leaders to provide continuity. The Warm Homes Suffolk project also signposted residents to other sources of help, including winter fuel payments.

Ms Howarth summarised a number of 'able to pay' options which were provided to households where income was higher than the £30,000 threshold. This included a bulk buy scheme for solar panels, interest free loans for energy efficient measures, thermal imaging community projects, energy advice and other support through the Greenprint Forum.

The Leader thanked the officers who worked on these projects and asked that Members who had any questions on the projects direct them to Councillor Kerry or to Ms Howarth.

## **10 Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27**

Full Council received report **ES/1427** by Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, which sought approval of the Capital Strategy 2023/24 - 2026/27. It was reported that the Capital Strategy gave a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of local public services in East Suffolk, along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The Capital Strategy was a critical component in the delivery of many ambitions included within the Strategic Plan. It was not only essential to achieving one of the three overarching strategic priorities of the Plan ("Financial Sustainability") but was also vital in the delivery of a vast range of service development and delivery initiatives.

The East Suffolk Capital Strategy for 2023/24 through to 2026/27 was at Appendix A to the report. The strategy pulled together all the various policies and strategies that the Council has in relation to capital and provides the key elements from them, such as:

- capital expenditure and financing, which relates to the Council's capital programme.
- treasury management, covering borrowing and investments.
- investment for service purposes and regeneration.
- revenue implications of the capital programme.
- the Chief Finance Officer's statement on the affordability and risk of the Capital Strategy.

Councillor Cook reported that the Audit and Governance Committee reviewed the Strategy at its meeting on 12 December 2022 and recommended it to Full Council for approval.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Cook.

Councillor Beavan stated that the Council had decided to invest £600,000 in the Southwold Enterprise Hub, which would provide a very small return of 0.8% compared to other investments, which would provide a return of around 5%. He felt that the plans for the Hub were too optimistic. The Chairman asked Councillor Beavan if he had a question, as this was not the time for debate. Councillor Beavan stated he would debate this later.

Councillor Byatt thanked Councillor Cook and the Finance Team for their thorough report. He commented that he was disappointing that Suffolk did not receive any Levelling Up funding in this round of awards. He asked if the projects the Council had planned, were aiming to be Carbon Zero, as he felt it was important that Council Tax was used in the best way possible? Councillor Cook confirmed that the Capital Programme was focussed upon environmental issues wherever possible. He reminded Members of the various housing schemes which had been considered by Cabinet and Full Council, which had high energy efficiency standards including some with passivhaus standard.

There being no further questions, Councillor Cook moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Lynch.

The Chairman invited Members to debate.

Councillor Beavan continued to raise his concerns regarding the investment in the Hub in Southwold. He stated that whilst he would support the Capital Programme this evening, he hoped that the Hub project would not progress further. Councillor Cook reported that the Council had decided to support the Hub project, at the request of Southwold Town Council, who were very supportive of the project, as it would help to increase the diversity of Southwold.

There being no further debate, the recommendation was put to the vote and it was by unanimous vote

## **RESOLVED**

That the Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27 be approved.

### **11 Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24 & Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2023/24**

Full Council received report **ES/1428** by Councillor Cook, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, which sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Treasury Management Investment Strategy. It was noted that the East Suffolk Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24 was Appendix A to the report and the Investment Strategy for 2023/24 was Appendix B, which covered:

- the current treasury position;
- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy; and
- the investment strategy.

Councillor Cook stated that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement at Appendix A provided Members with details of the economic background that the Council had been operating in and the credit outlook and interest rate forecast.

The Treasury Management Indicators help the Council to measure and manage its exposure to treasury management risks. The indicators covered:

- security, liquidity, and interest rate exposure,
- maturity structure of borrowing,
- principal sums invested for periods longer than one year,
- operational boundary for external debt and authorised limit for external debt.

Annex A of Appendix A provided Members with Arlingclose's economic and interest rate forecast as at November 2022. It was noted that as at 30 November 2022, the Council held £65.65m of borrowing and £131.34m of investments. Annex B of Appendix A provided a further breakdown of those amounts.

Councillor Cook stated that the Investment Strategy at Appendix B provided Members with details on treasury management investments, risk exposure and the rate of investment return. Members noted that the Audit and Governance Committee had reviewed the Strategy at its meeting on 12 December 2022 and had recommended it to Full Council for approval.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Cook.

Councillor Byatt had a query on page 56 of the report. He asked why the limit on principal invested beyond year end had changed? In 2022/23 it was £10 million and in 2023/24 and for subsequent years it had reduced to £5 million. Councillor Cook invited Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer, to answer this query. Mr Mew reported that the limit had been changed following the advice received from Arlingclose.

Councillor Byatt queried page 62 of the report, which showed the Council had invested in other local authorities. He asked why the investment at Watford Borough Council provided 0.20% interest, when the investments at other authorities were much higher? Mr Mew reported that this was likely to have been a 1 year investment, which was rolled over for a second year, just prior to the increases in the interest rates.

Councillor Cook moved the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Lynch.

Councillor Lynch commented that the Audit and Governance Committee looked at the investments made by the Council, at their last meeting, and the at the time of the initial investment to Watford Borough Council, interest rates had been extremely low and the Council had proceeded, due to the security of the loan. It was a judgement call and difficult to predict that interest rates would increase rapidly, as in 2022.

There being no further comments, the recommendation was put to the vote and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2023/24 be approved.

## **12 Council Tax Premiums on Second Homes and Empty Properties**

Full Council received report **ES/1430** by Councillor Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, which sought approval for the Council Tax Premiums on Second Homes and Empty Properties. Councillor Cook reported that the Council and its predecessors had lobbied for a number of years regarding the high levels of second homes in the district and some of the issues associated with this, including the impact on local housing supply and the loss of income to local authorities resulting from second homes being liable for business rates rather than council tax.

Members noted that reducing the number of long-term empty properties had also been a key Council priority. The Council currently charged the maximum council tax premiums on long term empty properties that were allowed under the current legislation and following an extensive Scrutiny Committee review of this subject, in April 2022, Cabinet approved revenue funding to deliver a three year long term empty homes programme.

In May 2022 the Government published the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which included proposals aimed at further addressing empty properties through the application of Council Tax premiums, in addition to measures which recognised the impact that high levels of second home ownership can have in some areas. It was reported that subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent, the proposed changes would come into effect on 1 April 2024. If the Council wished to adopt any changes arising from the Bill it was required to make a resolution confirming its requirements by no later than 31 March 2023.

The proposals in the report were considered in some detail and were intended to assist in addressing the problems of the provision of affordable housing in the district, and in securing significant levels of Council tax income, supporting all precepting authorities in the provision of services, especially the County Council. Members were asked to note that the recommendations were for additional council tax premiums, as all the existing premiums would also remain in place.

There were no questions, therefore the recommendations were moved by Councillor Cook and seconded by the Leader.

Councillor Beavan stated he was concerned that second homes could be converted to businesses to escape this extra tax. He hoped that the valuation office would share lists of registered businesses with HMRC, in order that they could check for extra income, if any. In respect of holiday lets businesses, he stated that they were also a problem that needed to be controlled by planning. There was an amendment to the Levelling Up Bill, to call for second homes and holiday lets to apply for new planning use classes on change of ownership.

Councillor Beavan commented that his Ward, Southwold, was predicted to contribute an extra £1.5m in council tax. He sincerely hoped that this would be used for affordable housing, rather than being given to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Cook commented that it was important to close the loophole and ensure that Council Tax was paid, if the property was not a legitimate business. He provided reassurance that the Council would be robust in pursuing second home owners. He conceded that some owners may flip their main residence with their second home, however, one of the properties would have to pay Council Tax, or alternatively, they may choose to sell the property, freeing up much needed homes in Southwold.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank Councillor Cook, the Finance Team and the Audit and Governance Committee for all of their hard work in relation to this report.

Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation was

## **RESOLVED**

1. That, in principle, the following additional Council Tax premiums be applied from 1 April 2024, subject to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receiving Royal Assent:

- 100% premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for a period of between 1 and 2 years;
- 100% premium for second homes.

2. That the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer be granted delegated authority to implement the introduction of these additional premiums when the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receives Royal Assent.

## **13 Housing Regulation**

Full Council received report **ES/1432** by Councillor Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility, which was presented by Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, in the absence of Councillor Kerry.

The report set out the responsibilities of East Suffolk Council as a Registered Provider of Social Housing. East Suffolk Council owned and was the social landlord for approximately 4,500 properties, which were managed under the Housing Revenue Account. Prior to East Suffolk Council being created, only Waveney District Council retained its housing stock. Suffolk Coastal District Council had transferred its properties to a Registered Provider a number of years before. Therefore, the Council's stock was predominantly located in the North of East Suffolk.

Members noted that Registered Providers of social housing were governed by the Regulator of Social Housing. The regulator had a set of standards, which landlords, must comply with. As a Local Authority, East Suffolk must comply with the Rent Standard and four Consumer Standards, including the Home Standard.

Councillor Rivett stated that Members would recall that Cllr Gallant had written to them last year, advising that, East Suffolk was making a self-referral to the Regulator for potential breaches of the Rent and Home Standards, following a review by the

recently appointed Head of Housing.

The report provided detailed information about the matters which led to a Regulatory Notice being issued by the Regulator for breaching the standards. It also provided an update on the significant amount of progress officers have made, since then, in relation to Rent Setting, and the Health, Safety and Compliance management of the Council's properties.

It was reported that the Housing Service had carried out a significant piece of work to review compliance of the stock and develop work programmes and contracts to ensure the properties were compliant and remained compliant, with levels of compliance being reviewed monthly. Councillor Rivett was pleased to advise that at the end of December 2022, East Suffolk's Housing Stock was 100% compliant for Asbestos Safety, Fire Safety, Lift Safety and Water Safety. Gas Safety was at 99.97%, with properties that officers were unable to access, now being dealt with by the Council's in-house legal team. Finally, East Suffolk was 97.67% compliant with electrical regulations. Members were reassured that this would be 100% by the end of the financial year, as there was a work programme in place, which was making great progress.

Councillor Rivett explained that the rents issue had been more difficult to fully resolve, due to the difference in policy and guidance documents which needed to be considered for different years. A thorough, forensic audit had been conducted, which had reviewed approximately 9,000 tenancies from 2010 to the present day. As a result, all current tenants rent levels would be reset at the end of the financial year. Councillor Rivett stated that he was pleased to assure Members that, from April 2023, the Council was confident that all tenants would be paying the correct rent levels.

Once the correct rent levels had been implemented, officers would then begin the refund process. Initially, current tenants would receive a letter outlining the impact any incorrect charges have had on them and the process for repayment. Once the current tenants had been refunded, officers would then start the process of contacting former tenants.

Members noted that this was a significant piece of work and the time it would take should not be underestimated. Each tenant would receive a personalised letter, to explain the incorrect charging in each financial year, the level of overpayment and a calculation of what, if any, was due back to Housing Benefit. To support this piece of work, three additional rents officers had been employed on a short-term basis. They would support the general day to day work associated with rent collection, whilst the Council's own permanent rent officers would lead on this complex area of work.

Councillor Rivett reported that at the time of producing this report, the forensic audit was 88% complete. Therefore, the figures detailed in the report were the current confirmed levels and the report also set out the 'projected' levels. For the period 2010/11 to 2021/22 the current confirmed level of refunds was £6,302,905 and was projected to increase to £7,203,320 once the audit was completed. In addition to the refunds up to and including the financial year 2021/22, corrections would be made to rent accounts for the current financial year 2022/23. It was estimated a further



£385,672 in refunds would be owed for the incorrect charging for heating services and £451,431.71 in relation to incorrect charging of rents.

Based on the data analysed, when 88% complete, there were 72% of current and former tenancies, which either currently or previously had been identified as being in receipt of housing benefit. Therefore, a significant level of refunds would be paid back to the Department for Work and Pensions. The report also set out a number of key policy decisions, which Members were required to make, which would then enable East Suffolk to rectify incorrect rent accounts and enable the refund process to commence. Once this was completed, East Suffolk would be fully compliant with the Regulators Rent Standard.

Councillor Rivett explained that there was a policy decision on how rent levels should be re-set and there were 3 options:

Option 1 – Members approve all rents previously converted from Social Rent to Affordable Rent, to be reset back to a Social (Formula) Rent, utilising Rent Flexibility, which was 5% for General Needs tenants and 10% for Retired Living Scheme Tenants.

Option 2 – Members approve all rents previously converted from Social Rent to Affordable Rent, to be reset back to a Social (Formula) Rent, without utilising Rent Flexibility.

Option 3 – Members approve any remaining Affordable Rents, from the original 260, which were permitted to be converted, to continue being charged an Affordable Rent.

There were multiple competing demands that needed to be covered in the HRA Business Plan, including the need to ensure all properties were maintained to a high standard, new requirements set out in legislation such as the Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations were adhered to, alongside ensuring that the Council's commitment to ensure all of the HRA stock could achieve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of Band C by 2030. In addition to this, the Council had also made a commitment to build at least 50 new homes per year and to pay back the HRA financing debt owed to the Government as soon as possible.

Members noted that, as a result, there was significant investment required to both maintain, improve and increase the Council's stock. The Council and its predecessor Waveney District Council had historically levied social rents below the maximum possible under the Formula Rent system. Accordingly, providing the level of investment required going forward was going to be a major challenge, which would require significant innovation and hard decisions. Therefore, achieving what was required and both maintaining and further improving the quality of the HRA stock would not be possible without applying rent flexibility.

Councillor Rivett asked Members to note Recommendation 4 in the report, which proposed Members agree to 'Option 1', listed above, that all tenancies formerly converted to an 'Affordable Rent' were reset back to a 'Social Rent' plus flexibility (5% for general needs and 10% for retired living schemes).

Councillor Rivett then took the opportunity to stress that no tenants would have a rent

increase as part of this process, every tenant would either be paying the same or less rent than they pay currently.

Another key policy decision that Members were required to make, related to the level of refunds the Council proposed to carry out. The Regulator of Social Housing had since April 2020 regulated local authorities in relation to Council Housing. The Regulator had set out its expectations (for the period it had regulated the Council) that the Council's rents for its council tenants should be adjusted to correct the previous mistake and that the tenants were refunded. In view of the Regulator's role, the Council was, in practice, expected to implement the Regulator's preferred action. It was noted that prior to April 2020, the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 set out requirements and a process for setting social rents which the Council should have complied with. In practice, the Council's mistake meant this was not complied with. The Council was not challenged about its non-compliance at that time. Prior to the 2016 Act, the Council was required to have regard to guidance issued by central government in regard to setting council housing rents. The Council's mistake meant it did not give proper regard to that guidance.

In making a decision in relation to providing financial restitution to affected tenants, the Council should have regard to its fiduciary duties. These could be briefly summarised as it acting as 'a trustee' of rental income, tax and public sector income on behalf of its tenants and rate and local taxpayers and other residents. The Council in effect holds money but does not own it, rather it spends money on behalf of its council tenants and leaseholders (and more widely its business rate and council taxpayers).

Therefore, Councillor Rivett requested that Members, whilst taking into consideration their fiduciary duties (as discussed at paragraphs 4.4 to 4.13 of the report) to agree as a matter of policy that any money incorrectly charged for rent charges as a result of the mistaken conversion of social rents to affordable rents, or the setting of incorrect social rent levels, be refunded in full. He then took the opportunity to thank officers within the housing service, who had achieved an incredible amount of work, since the issues were identified.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

Councillor Byatt thanked all those involved in resolving these issues. He also thanked the Leader, for updating the other Group Leaders about the matter, as soon as the problem was discovered. He then stated that he had a query on page 108, regarding the Regulatory Notice, which contained comments from the RSH and he felt that one of the comments was misleading. It was 'the breach of rent requirements was significant and had been compounded by the fact that the Council continued to charge incorrect rents for a period of almost 2 years, while knowing this may not be permissible.' Councillor Byatt felt that this was a very broad statement and he asked for the evidence that the Council knew about the incorrect rents? He noted that he and other Members had received correspondence about this matter from a member of the public who was suggesting that the Council had been devious and caused mischief regarding the issue. He stated that, in his opinion, the whole matter had been handled thoroughly by officers and by the Cabinet Member. He queried whether it would be possible to deny the misleading comment? Councillor Rivett shared Councillor Byatt's sentiments that this had not been a devious act, the actions of the Leader in keeping

the Opposition Group Leaders apprised, plus the many public statements and the Council's self-referral to the Regulator shows that there was no cover up. An honest mistake had been made and the Council was now putting things right. This report was, of course, public and anyone interested could read for themselves and see the actions that the Council had taken.

Councillor Gooch reported that this matter had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee last week, where she had raised a query regarding scams. She sought reassurance that tenants would be safeguarded and provided with clear information about the process of getting a refund, so that they could not be taken advantage of by scammers, asking for their bank details to pay them the refunds owed. Councillor Rivett stated that the Housing Team were cognisant that there were many people trying to take advantage of others and he invited Heather Tucker, Head of Housing, to provide further information. Ms Tucker confirmed that she was acutely aware of this issue and, as such, tenants would be written to on an individual basis, as part of the rent setting exercise, after the Full Council meeting in February. The letter would set out the Council's approach to the refund process, whereby only East Suffolk Council would contact them about their rent. She confirmed that none of this work would be passed on to any third party organisations. Also, after this meeting, should the recommendations be approved, a communications programme had been planned, with a dedicated Housing Regulation page being added to the website. When the refund process took place, it would be clearly stated that refunds would only proceed via East Suffolk. The Council also needed to make sure that it was paying the correct people back, therefore, in the case of former tenants who no longer had a rent account, mechanisms would be put in place to ensure proof of ID and bank accounts were sought, ensuring that all processes were robust.

Councillor Lynch stated that the Council currently had rent arrears of approximately £1.6 million and there was also a significant amount of money about to be refunded to tenants. He asked if those tenants who were in arrears could use some of their refund to balance some of those debts, as that would improve the situation for some tenants overall. Councillor Rivett invited Ms Tucker to provide a response. She stated that legal advice had been sought and the Council would be able to credit current rent accounts and also former tenants that still had rents outstanding. Therefore, the outstanding rent arrears levels were anticipated to reduce, however, further information would not be available until all of the data had been entered into the computer system. The Council would not need to pay any tenant back if they were in arrears, unless there was a difference owing at the end of the process.

Councillor Rivett then moved the recommendations within the report, which were seconded by the Leader.

The Leader thanked Councillor Rivett for his comprehensive introduction, to what was a complex and detailed report, as well as standing in at the last minute for Councillor Kerry. He stated that it was disappointing that there had clearly been significant failures, which went back many years. However, he was incredibly grateful that the Council had identified these issues and once they were identified, a significant programme of work had been put in place to return to full compliance.

The Leader reported that he had regular meetings with the Strategic Management

Team and Head of Housing and had been assured throughout the whole process that this was being treated with the utmost importance, professionalism and in a thorough and co-ordinated way, to ensure all scenarios were considered and solutions found. When these issues first became public last year, he had made a commitment that the Council would ensure anyone who was impacted financially would be refunded in full, and he stood by that commitment.

The Council must consider its fiduciary duties, and as Councillor Rivett had said previously, these could be briefly summarised as acting as 'a trustee' of rental income on behalf of tenants, so the Council in effect holds money but does not own it, rather it spends money on behalf of its Council tenants and leaseholders. Therefore, he believed that anyone who had been overcharged should be repaid in full and I hoped Members would agree and support that recommendation.

In relation to the recommendation that the Council utilised rent flexibility, he felt that this was prudent on the basis that there was significant investment required to both maintain Council properties and also ensure they met the Council's carbon reduction aspirations. Not only that, but he was proud that new housing was being developed and he wanted that to continue.

The Leader stated that it was very reassuring to hear that no tenants would see any rent increases as a result of the rent re-setting process. He was also really pleased to hear about the level of asset compliance within the Council's housing stock. This had not been possible without the support of external specialists. However, this work was being embedded within the Council's own service and Cabinet had been delighted to approve a Business Case at the end of last year, to recruit a dedicated compliance and servicing team. The roles had been advertised, and interviews had been taking place over the last couple of weeks. He had been pleased to hear there had been an incredibly high calibre of candidates and the new team was expected to start over the next couple of months.

The Leader wished to place on record his thanks to the Leaders of the other political parties at East Suffolk, who had been supportive with officers in meetings regarding the work they had been carrying out. He also wanted to pay tribute to everyone within the Housing Service who had worked tirelessly to improve the levels of compliance and deal with the legacy rent issues. It had been an incredibly challenging time and the level and quality of work they have produced had been phenomenal. He also thanked the other teams within the organisation, without whom the Housing Service would not have been able to make the progress they had, which included Legal, Procurement, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Building Control, Customer Services and the Communications Team.

Councillor Topping then sought clarification regarding recommendation 5 and asked whether it needed to be made clearer that any refund could be used to clear arrears? The Leader stated that it was clear that the refund would be paid in full, into their rent account. However, that money would offset any rent that they owed to the Council, via their rent account, rather than the Council with-holding any of their refund.

There being no further questions or debate, it was put to the vote and unanimously

## RESOLVED

1. That Members noted the information contained within this report and endorse the actions set out to ensure the Council is compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer 'Home Standard'.
2. That Members noted the information contained within this report and endorse the actions set out to ensure the Council is compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing Economic 'Rent Standard'.
3. That Members noted that all heating service charges, also referred to as de-pooled rental charges, are (after further and more detailed legal advice) now acknowledged to be a breach of Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and that therefore, all such money received from this charge must be refunded in full, for the years 2010 – 2023.
4. That Members agreed to 'Option 1', listed above, that all tenancies formerly converted to an 'Affordable Rent' are reset back to a 'Social Rent' plus flexibility (5% for general needs and 10% for retired living schemes).
5. That Members, whilst taking into consideration their fiduciary duties (as discussed at paragraphs 4.4 to 4.13 of this report) agreed as a matter of policy that any money incorrectly charged for rent charges as a result of the mistaken conversion of social rents to affordable rents, or the setting of incorrect social rent levels, be refunded in full.
6. That Members noted that quarterly updates will be presented to Cabinet, detailing the progress against the Compliance and Rent Improvement Plans.

## 14 Freeport East Business Rates Relief and Retained Rates Policies

The Chairman announced that there would be a 10 minute comfort break at this point in the proceedings. The meeting was therefore adjourned between 8.25pm to 8.35 pm. It was noted that Councillors John Fisher, Sarah Plummer, Rachel Smith-Lyte, Ed Thompson and Caroline Topping left the meeting during this adjournment.

Full Council received report **ES/1146** by Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development, which sought approval to adopt the Freeport East Business Rate Relief and Freeport East Retained Rates policies, as they applied to East Suffolk. As the billing authority for the Felixstowe Tax Site, the Council needed to approve a Rate Relief policy in order to award rate reliefs to businesses locating on the site, in accordance with the Freeport objectives.

It was noted that the retained rates policy set out how the Council would manage retained rates income and the governance structure which would approve expenditure in line with Freeport East objectives. The policy detailed the allocation of rates into various 'pots' dependent on the end use of that funding, as well as setting out the principle of 'top slicing' to cover Freeport East's operational costs and any direct costs borne by ESC in its role as Lead Authority/ accountable body. Furthermore, the policy

covered ESC's accountable body role with respect to the management of the pooled retained business rates contributed by all Freeport East billing authorities.

Councillor Rivett reported that the use of these retained rates would partially reimburse ESC for forgone rates, allow significant infrastructure investment within the Freeport tax sites, thereby maximising the value of development which could take place on the site and contribute to a collective rates pool which would enable the delivery of wider Freeport East initiative, as set out within the Full Business Case across the whole freeport zone.

Freeport East's Full Business Case was approved by the government's Treasury Assessment Panel in November 2022. Following approval, a Memorandum of Understanding was issued to Freeport East, the billing authorities and the accountable body (ESC) by DLUHC. This will form an agreement between DLUHC and these organisations which commits partners to deliver the objectives set out within the Full Business Case. Within the MoU the awarding of rate relief and the management/ allocation of retained rates was detailed. For ESC to comply with these elements of the MoU the Council needed to establish policies for the awarding of Freeport business rate relief and the management/ expenditure of retained rates. The proposed policies were contained in appendices A and B to the report.

It was anticipated that the total retained rates pot over the course of the 25 year initiative would be in excess of £300m (c£69m just from the Felixstowe Tax Site) and would contribute significantly to the economic, financial and net zero priorities of the Strategic Plan.

Councillor Beavan sought clarification that if a business were to move into the Freeport area, from outside the area, they would not be eligible for the subsidised rates? Councillor Rivett invited officers to answer this question. Mr Mew, Chief Finance Officer, reported that there needed to be evidence that the move was genuine growth in business in the area rather than displacement from another area before rate relief and other tax advantages were awarded. Freeports were closely modelled upon Enterprise Zones initiatives.

Councillor Byatt referred to page 187 and the application forms for discretionary relief and sought further information about the publicity planned to raise awareness of the rate reliefs available? Councillor Rivett stated that it was in everyone's interest to promote the Freeport as far as possible and the Council would be very proactive in that. He commented that this was a long process and there was still much to be achieved. Paul Wood, Head of Economic Development and Regeneration, advised that marketing would be done at a range of levels, which would include a Communications and Marketing Strategy. The Freeport opportunities would be marketed nationally and internationally as part of the Government's flagship policy.

Councillor Byatt also sought further clarification about where those adjacent areas were, which were mentioned in relation to Pot B. He asked if they were the Wards affected or further afield? Mr Wood reported that adjacent areas were those areas immediately surrounding the tax site, where investment in infrastructure in the immediate vicinity would maximise opportunities for business investment on a tax site. It was noted that there was a clear assessment and criteria, which would be

closely monitored by the Council.

Councillor Gooch asked if there was a single consolidated document regarding all of the training opportunities? Councillor Rivett reported that the aspirations for the Freeport were included within the Full Business Case and a copy of this would be provided to Councillor Gooch, for information, which would include skills, community, levelling up and the investment in net zero.

Councillor Daly asked about how the planning rules were applied in relation to the Freeport and the immediately surrounding areas? Councillor Rivett reported that the planning rules were the same as those for Enterprise Zones. There would be a slight relaxation of the planning rules and the Council was used to dealing with this at the Enterprise Zones within the District. Councillor Daly stated that he was not familiar with Enterprise Zones and their planning rules and he requested a further, more detailed explanation as to the differences in planning regulation that the Freeport could enjoy. Councillor Rivett reported that he did not have the information to hand and would provide Councillor Daly with further information outside of the meeting.

Councillor Rivett moved the recommendations within the report, which were seconded by Councillor Cook. Councillor Cook commented that he was happy to support the recommendations and thanked those officers involved in this complex area of work.

Upon being put to the vote it was

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Freeport East Business Rate Relief policy attached as Appendix A be approved.
2. That the Freeport East Retained Rates policy attached as Appendix B be approved.

N.B. Councillor Patience left the meeting after the voting on this item, at 8.48 pm.

## **15 Freeport East Capital Seed Funding**

Full Council received report **ES/1429** by Councillor Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development. The report sought approval from Full Council to the proposed management and operation of the Freeport East Capital Seed Fund, which set out how £25m of central Government Freeport capital funding would be managed and allocated. ESC, as Accountable Body, for Freeport East was required to establish a process for the management of those funds which demonstrated good governance and ensured they were allocated as detailed within the Full Business Case and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The Capital Seed Fund allocation would support Freeport East's development through major investment in the three tax sites, to maximise inward investment and create confidence in Freeport East as a commercial proposition. Maximising the business investment potential through the use of the Capital Seed Fund would support the delivery of the wider Freeport East objectives, as set out within the Full Business Case

and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) through the generation of retained business rates.

Councillor Rivett reported that the decision on how this funding would be allocated across the Tax Sites was set out within Full Business Case, with the Felixstowe Site receiving the largest allocation (£12m) to invest in site infrastructure between 2023 and 2025.

Councillor Rivett moved the recommendation within the report, which was seconded by Councillor Cook.

There being no questions or debate, the recommendation was put to the vote and it was

## **RESOLVED**

That the Freeport East Capital Seed Funding Management process attached as Appendix A be approved in line with the Council's role as the Freeport Accountable Body.

## **16 Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24**

Full Council received report **ES/1426** by the Leader of the Council, which sought approval for the Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year. Members noted that the Calendar of Meetings provided the framework for the democratic and decision-making processes that would underpin the delivery of the key priorities identified within the Council's East Suffolk Strategic Plan.

The Chairman of the Council / Chairmen of the Committees had the power to call additional or 'Extraordinary' meetings when required, to accommodate urgent or unscheduled items of business or to change a meeting date to reflect unexpected circumstances e.g. bad weather.

The Calendar (once approved) would be published on the Council's website via CMIS. The meeting papers for Full Council, Cabinet and the Committees were also available to view on the website. The majority of the Council's meetings were available to view on the Council's YouTube channel, when 'open' items of business are being considered.

The Leader advised that the meeting dates for the Community Partnerships and the Community Partnership Board would be populated as soon as was practicable and this would then be shared with Members, when it was available. The Community Partnership Board and the eight Community Partnerships would all meet in late May or June, where possible, to ensure that the momentum of the last three and a half years was maintained.

The Chairman invited questions to the Leader.

Councillor Byatt queried the standardised start time for meetings and suggested that it may be helpful for meetings to start earlier, which may assist some Members to remain present for the duration of the meeting. The Leader reported that it was not possible



to please all Members and it was important to note that many Members worked, therefore, an earlier start time would cause them difficulties in attending.

Councillor Gooch commented that the start time of Full Council meetings could be changed to 6.00pm, which may assist those Members who relied upon public transport and the time change should not negatively impact those who worked. The Leader stated that it took him 1 hour and 15 minutes to travel to Riverside from his home, and many other Members had a similar journey time. It would negatively impact those Members who worked if the start time was changed and he confirmed it was not possible to please everyone.

Councillor Gandy commented that she worked in Norwich and was able to get to meetings for 6.30pm. She stated that Members could choose to catch a later train, they did not need to leave the meeting at 8.30pm.

The Leader then moved the recommendation within the report and this was seconded by Councillor Rivett and upon being put to the vote it was unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 be approved.

### **17 Cabinet Members Report and Outside Bodies Representatives Reports to Council**

Full Council received report **ES/1425**, which was presented by Councillor Gallant, Leader of the Council, and provided individual Cabinet Members' reports on their areas of responsibility, as well as reports from those Members appointed to represent East Suffolk Council on Outside Bodies. The Leader stated that the written reports could be taken as read and he invited relevant questions on their contents.

In relation to the Cabinet Member update from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure the Tourism, Councillor Blundell requested that the Community Partnership Chairmen be kept updated on the outcomes of the work being undertaken with schools in their areas. It was confirmed that information would be provided as appropriate.

Councillor Gandy asked Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism, if there was any information about the number of people using the Warm Rooms that were being provided across the District, to assist with the cost of living crisis. Councillor Smith confirmed that information about attendance was being collated and this information would be shared with Councillors at a future Full Council meeting.

### **18 Exempt/Confidential Items**

The Chairman reported that in exceptional circumstances, the Council may, by law, exclude members of the public from all, or part of, an executive decision-making meeting. There were various reasons that the Council, on occasions, had to do this and examples were because a report contained information relating to an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, or

information relating to any consultations or negotiations.

This evening, there was one set of Exempt minutes for approval, which were from the Full Council meeting which took place on 23 November 2022.

On the proposition of the Chairman, seconded by the Leader, it was by a unanimous vote

**RESOLVED**

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**19 Exempt Minutes**

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

The meeting concluded at 9.23 pm

.....  
Chairman



# FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 February 2023

<b>Subject</b>	General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Maurice Cook Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Brian Mew Chief Finance Officer & S151 Officer <a href="mailto:brian.mew@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">brian.mew@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	N/A
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

### Purpose of Report:

At the end of the 2023/24 budget process, the Council is required to approve a balanced budget for the following financial year and set the Band D rate of Council Tax. This report sets out the context and initial parameters in order to achieve that objective and contribute towards a sustainable position.

The report brings together all the relevant information to enable Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's General Fund revenue budget.

### Options:

Setting a balanced budget for the coming year is a statutory requirement. Consequently, no other options are appropriate.

### Discretionary Rate Reliefs

Local authorities are expected to use their discretionary relief powers (under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended) to grant reliefs in 2022/23 in line with the relevant eligibility criteria. Consequently, not awarding these reliefs has not been considered as an option.

### Discretionary Rate Relief to Charities, Non-Profit Making Organisations, (NPMOs) and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CAS)

There is an option of not disregarding Covid-19 Grant funding from the value of unrestricted reserves and operating surpluses, but this could potentially deprive these organisations of rate reliefs as a source of funding as a result of the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic.

### Recommendations:

That Council is recommended to;

1. Consider the Chief Financial Officer's report attached at **Appendix C**;
2. Approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27, including the General Fund Revenue Budget revised for 2022/23; the proposed budget for 2023/24; and forecast budgets for 2024/25 to 2026/27 as set out in **Appendix A5**;
3. Approve the movements to and from Earmarked Reserves and the General Fund Balance for 2022/23 to 2026/27 as set out in **Appendix A7**;
4. Approve the items to be treated as special items in 2023/24 as set out in **paragraph 3.20** – the precepts by Town/Parish Councils and parish meetings;
5. Approve that no further changes are made to Council Tax Discounts and Premiums for 2023/24;
6. Approve the distribution of Council Tax Support funding under s13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as outlined in **paragraph 3.6**;
7. Grant the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer delegated authority to award any further council tax reliefs in 2023/24 arising from Government announcements under these powers;
8. Approve a Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £181.17 for 2023/24, an increase of £4.95 or 2.81%;
9. Approve the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy attached as **Appendix B**;
10. Approve the Pay Policy Statement set out in **Appendix D**;

11. Approve the Council Tax Resolutions in **Appendix E**;
12. Approve the award of 75% relief on rates bills up to £110,000 per business to eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties using its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended;
13. Approve the award of rate reliefs under the Supporting Small Business (SSB) scheme using its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended;
14. Approve that, for 2023/24, awards of Discretionary Rate Relief to Charities, Non-Profit Making Organisations, (NPMOs) and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CAS) continue to disregard the value of Covid-19 Grant funding from the value of unrestricted reserves and operating surpluses;
15. Grant the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer delegated authority to award any further rate reliefs in 2023/24 arising from Government announcements under these powers.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is an essential element in achieving a balanced budget and a sustainable medium term position, whilst setting a balanced budget for the coming year is a statutory requirement. The 2023/24 budget is considered at the following Council meetings:

- Cabinet 3 January 2023
- Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023
- Cabinet 7 February 2023
- Full Council 22 February 2023

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

- East Suffolk Strategic Plan
- East Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Capital Programme
- Housing Revenue Account
- East Suffolk Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Policy
- Annual Governance Statement
- Financial Management Code

### **Environmental:**

There are no environmental impacts directly related to this report.

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

This report has been prepared having taken into account the results of an Equality Impact Assessment. The annual budget collates the financial implications of the Council's individual policies, projects, and initiatives and Equality Impact Assessments are produced for these specific actions.

**Financial:**

The cost of discretionary rate reliefs will be fully funded by the Government. The continuation of the 2022/23 policy regarding discretionary rate relief to charities and other organisations will have a marginal financial impact on the Council and the award of these reliefs would be within existing budgets.

This report presents a balanced position for the current year and 2023/24, with a budget gap of £3.511m in 2024/25, increasing to £6.4m by 2026/27. In the MTFS, very considerable increased expenditure and reducing income pressures are being dealt with by a combination of measures, including a thorough analysis of current and projected savings, and the release of a number of earmarked reserves into the General Fund. Earmarked reserves have been reviewed, and have been released in respect of the following situations:

- to support service expenditure in line with their original intended purpose
- where the reserve is no longer required for its original purpose.

To ultimately balance the budget in 2022/23, £1.098m has been used from the In-Year Savings Reserve.

A key factor in balancing the budget for 2023/24 has been the deferral of Business Rates system changes until 2025/26 at the earliest, as East Suffolk is in an advantageous position under the current system. Due to the level of Business Rates income for 2023/24, use of reserves to balance the budget has not been required. In light of the impending reform, the approach that has been taken is to roll forward the estimates for 2023/24 through to 2026/27, with the exception being a tapering of the Pooling Benefit. This is to reflect a cautious approach to the overall Business Rates income position in the latter years of the MTFS.

**Human Resources:**

There are no HR implications directly arising from this report.

**ICT:**

There are no ICT implications directly arising from this report.

**Legal:**

**Council Tax Calculations** – Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a personal duty on an authority's "Chief Financial Officer" to make a report to Council about the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Council Tax calculations and the adequacy of financial reserves and balances. The Act also requires the Council to have regard to the report before it makes its budget and Council Tax decisions.

**Balanced Budget** – The provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 set out what the Council has to base its budget calculations upon and require the Council to set a balanced budget with regard to the advice of its Chief Finance Officer (Section 151).

**Pay Policy Statement** - Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to produce a Pay Policy for each financial year. There is a requirement for the Council to compare the policies on remunerating Chief Officers and other employees, and to set out the policy on the lowest paid employees.

The interpretation of the meaning of "Chief Officer(s)" as used above in the context of the Pay Policy Statement includes the Chief Executive, the Strategic Directors, the Heads of Service, and the Chief Finance Officer.

**Special Items** – Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides for certain items of expenditure to be treated as ‘special items’ chargeable to part only of the District when setting the Council Tax. The items referred to are detailed in paragraph 3.20.

**Rate Reliefs** – will be awarded by the Council using its discretionary relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended.

**Risk:**

Part of the process of delivering a robust medium-term strategy to enable the Council to manage its affairs soundly, is to have regard to both external and internal risks, and to identify actions to mitigate those risks. MTFS key principles and a risk analysis together with mitigating actions are provided in **Appendix A1**.

<b>External Consultees:</b>	<p>Budget-related consultation questions now form a standing part of the permanent residents survey, which is live via the ESC website, and via other channels. This has been promoted again in the Autumn edition of the residents magazine, and there has been increased promotion to businesses. A summary of responses for 2022 as at December 2022 are provided in <b>Appendix F</b> and includes responses from residents and businesses.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee considered the General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24 at its meeting on 19 January 2023. A copy of the Scrutiny Committee pre-meeting questions are provided in <b>Appendix G</b>, and a copy of the unconfirmed minutes from the meeting are provided in <b>Appendix H</b>.</p>
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**How does this proposal support the priorities selected?**

By ensuring the robustness of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and adequate reserves and balances of the Council, the MTFS underpins and supports the delivery of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan. The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy enables the Council to potentially take advantage of a valuable flexibility enabling funding of the revenue costs of a number of the Council's key projects in the medium term. The flexibility will enable the Council to optimise the use of capital receipts and conserve revenue budget resources. Discretionary rate reliefs will continue to assist these businesses in 2023/24, and continuation of the policy in respect of charity and other organisations to disregard Covid-19 grants will continue to enable discretionary rate relief support to be provided to them. All of these measures contribute directly to the Strategic Plan theme of Growing our Economy. The Council Tax Support scheme will assist households with cost of living pressures, contributing to the Enabling Communities theme.

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The MTFS sets the strategic financial direction for the Council. It sets out the key financial management principles, budget assumptions and service issues.
1.2	<p>The MTFS provides a framework for the detailed budget setting process to ensure that resources are managed effectively and are able to deliver the aspirations of the Council as set out in the Strategic Plan. It provides a sound basis for planning and decision making, and is reviewed and updated at the following key points in the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November/December – as a framework for initial detailed budget discussions for the forthcoming financial year.</li> <li>• January – an update to include additional information received at a national level and corporate issues identified through service planning and the detailed budget build.</li> <li>• February – with the final Budget for the new financial year.</li> </ul>



1.3	<p>The key underlying principles of the MTFS are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• securing a balanced budget with reduced reliance on the use of reserves and general balances to support its everyday spending;</li> <li>• setting modest increases in Council Tax when appropriate; and</li> <li>• delivering service efficiencies and generating additional income where there are opportunities to do so.</li> </ul>
1.4	<p>The introduction of the Local Business Rates Retention System in 2013/14, together with the Government's programme of fiscal consolidation since 2010, have combined to both reduce the level of funding available to the Council, and to shift the balance of funding significantly away from central to local sources, although in recent years the high level of rate reliefs and Section 31 Grant to fund them has effectively shifted the balance back towards central funding to an extent.</p>
<b>2 Current position</b>	
2.1	<p><b>Economic Outlook</b></p> <p>The national economic background affects the costs the Council incurs, the funding it receives, and contributes to the demand for services as residents are affected by economic circumstances. Following the pandemic, the UK economy is being impacted by a series of other events, including rising living costs, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a labour shortage, and UK fiscal policy and financial market turbulence. The squeeze on real incomes, rising interest rates, and a fall in house prices all weigh on consumption and investment, with the Bank of England reporting that the UK is set to enter recession this year. However this is forecast to be shorter and less severe than previously expected.</p>
2.2	<p>As per the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS), the unemployment rate of England was 3.7% in the three months to November 2022, compared with 3.5% in the previous three months. This latest figure is also 0.3% below pre-pandemic levels. Unemployment is expected to peak at 4.9% in the third quarter of 2024.</p>
2.3	<p>Twelve-month CPI inflation fell from 10.7% in November to 10.5% in December. The Bank of England projects CPI inflation to fall sharply to around 4% towards the end of this year. This is largely due to past increases in energy costs and other goods prices falling out of the calculation of the annual rate. It expects inflation to fall to the official target of 2% in the medium term.</p>
2.4	<p>At its meeting ending on 1 February 2023, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted by a majority of 7-2 to increase the bank rate by 0.50% to 4.0%. This is the tenth increase in a row. The bank rate is expected to rise further in 2023, to around 4.5% by mid-year before falling to just over 3.25% in three years' time.</p>
2.5	<p><b>Local Government Finance</b></p> <p>On the 17 November 2022 the Chancellor announced the Autumn Statement, alongside the updated forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The indication at the time was for all existing grant funding to be protected in cash terms in 2023/24 and 2024/25, and then to grow by 1% per year in real terms for the following three years.</p>
2.6	<p>The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24 was announced on 19 December 2022. This was a one-year settlement and the best in cash terms that local government has received for over a decade. However, against a backdrop of inflation, the settlement will still leave many local authorities with significant financial pressures. The Provision Settlement introduced a new Funding Guarantee Allocation, amounting to £1.512m for East Suffolk. This new funding guarantee is in recognition of inflationary pressures and ensures</p>

that all Councils see at least a 3% increase in their Core Spending Power(CSP). The Revenue Support Grant was increased by 10.1%, plus other grants rolled in. Other funding streams were either frozen, reduced or rolled into the Funding Guarantee Allocation.

The Final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 6 February 2023. Changes between the Provisional and Final Settlement showed a re-allocation of funding from the Funding Guarantee to the Rural Services Delivery Grant and the Services Grant, but with no change to the overall funding to the Council. There was also a minor change to the Revenue Support Grant.

	DLUHC Provisional Settlement 19-Dec-22 2023/24 £	DLUHC Final Settlement 6-Feb-23 2023/24 £	Difference between Provisional and Final Settlement 2023/24 £	
Funding Allocations				Comments
Lower Tier Services Grant	0	0	0	This grant has been abolished from 2023/24 and repurposed towards the Funding Guarantee. No change.
Services Grant	(269,000)	(280,100)	(11,100)	Reallocation from Funding Guarantee.
Revenue Support Grant	(702,800)	(704,100)	(1,300)	Minimal change.
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(260,300)	(290,900)	(30,600)	Reallocation from Funding Guarantee.
Funding Guarantee	(1,553,200)	(1,511,500)	41,700	Funding reallocated between Services Grant and the Rural Services Delivery Grant.
New Homes Bonus	(447,100)	(447,100)	0	No change.
<b>Total</b>	<b>(3,232,400)</b>	<b>(3,233,700)</b>	<b>(1,300)</b>	

- 2.7 Key points from the Settlement are shown below, with more detail provided in Section 4 of **Appendix A**:
- Core Spending Power for East Suffolk (basically the assumed total of all income streams including Council Tax) increased by 4.7%.
  - Council Tax referendum limit for shire districts remains at 3% or £5, whichever is the greater.
  - Revenue Support Grant £0.704m. This grant was increased by 10.1%, plus other existing grants rolled in.
  - Rural Services Delivery Grant has increased from the 2022/23 allocation of £0.260m to £0.291m.
  - Lower Tier Services Grant(LTSG) has been abolished and repurposed towards the new Funding Guarantee Allocation. The 2022/23 LTSG allocation was £0.311m.
  - 2023/24 Services Grant has been reduced from £0.477m to £0.280m to remove funding provided for the Health and Social Care Levy which was reversed from 6 November 2022.
  - Funding Guarantee, a new funding stream for 2023/24 of £1.512m.
  - New Homes Bonus (NHB) one-year allocation of £0.447m.
- 2.8 Following consideration of the budget by Cabinet on 7 February 2023 there have been some updates to the budget for this report. This is detailed in **Appendix A4**. The key change is in relation to Business Rates income in 2023/24 and associated Section 31 Grant following the completion of the NNDR1 Return.

2.9	<p><b>Reserves and Balances</b></p> <p>The total balance of General Fund Earmarked Reserves was £62m as of 1 April 2022. Earmarked Reserves are categorised into the following groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Grants/Funding Carried Forward</b> – this is external funding the Council has received for specific purposes and is drawn down from reserves when spend is incurred.</li> <li>• <b>Planned Future Revenue Spending</b> – Council funding has been set aside for specific service areas and/or projects.</li> <li>• <b>Planned Future Capital Spending</b> – this is revenue funding set aside to provide funding for the Capital Programme.</li> <li>• <b>Risk Based</b> – Council funding has been set aside for unforeseen budget pressures and fluctuations in budget areas of volatility. The Business Rate Equalisation Reserve is the main reserve within this group. This reserve is primarily held to manage fluctuations in Business Rates income, due to the timing of accounting treatments. The reserve will also be called upon to address budget gap pressures. Another reserve in this category is the In-Year Savings reserve, which is mainly used to address budget gaps.</li> <li>• <b>Covid Reserve</b> – Mainly consisting of Section 31 Grants to fund Covid related Business Rate Reliefs and the Local Authority support grant. This reserve is forecast to be used by the end of this financial year, with the exception of approximately £0.600m of Section 31 Grant to fund the 2020/21 Collection Fund Deficit treatment.</li> <li>• <b>Port Health</b> – The Port Health reserve balance as at 1 April 2022 was £4.3m. This reserve is expected to be fully utilised over the MTFS period, to meet operation needs and as external funding held in reserve is allocated towards relevant spent. This reserve will be closely monitored over the MTFS period, due to continuing uncertainty surrounding the post Brexit situation.</li> </ul> <p>A review of reserves has been undertaken this year, to identify reserve balances which have not been used for some time and/or are no longer required for their original purpose. This exercise has identified £1.8m of reserve balances to be released into the General Fund in the current year.</p> <p>In addition to the Covid reserve which will be fully used, there are a number of other reserves that are forecast to be fully or substantially utilised over this period, and not replenished. This includes the NHB reserve, Transformation reserve, Capital reserve and Port Health reserve. As at the end of 2026/27 the total balance for Earmarked Reserves is estimated to be £31.59m.</p>
2.10	The General Fund balance remains at £6m, with no planned use over the MTFS period.
<b>3 How to address current situation</b>	
3.1	<p><b>Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS); Council Tax Discounts and Premiums; Council Tax Support and Council Tax Base</b></p> <p>The consideration of an annual review and potential proposed changes to the LCTRS scheme is a statutory requirement under the Local Government Finance Act 2012, which brought in the provisions for localisation of council tax support in April 2013. Cabinet on 1 November 2022 approved that no change be made to the East Suffolk Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2023/24, and the core of the scheme continues to be the 8.5% benefit scheme, i.e., the maximum benefit to working age claimants is 91.5%.</p>

3.2	In addition to LCTRS, the Council has the discretion to set its own policy on Council Tax Discounts and Premiums. It is a statutory requirement for the Council to set and review annually its Discretionary Council Tax Discounts. It is recommended that no changes be made to the Council Tax discounts to be applied from 1 April 2023, which were approved by the Shadow Council at its meeting on 3 December 2018.
3.3	<p>At its meeting on 28 February 2019, the East Suffolk Shadow Council approved Council Tax Long Term Empty Property Premiums as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% premium on Long Term Empty properties, empty for more than two years, raising the Council Tax to 200% from 1 April 2019,</li> <li>• 200% premium on Long Term Empty properties, empty for longer than five years, raising the Council Tax to 300% from 1 April 2020, and</li> <li>• 300% premium on Long Term Empty properties, empty for longer than 10 years, raising the Council Tax to 400% from 1 April 2021.</li> </ul>
3.4	<p>At its meeting on 25 January 2023, Full Council approved that, in principle, the following additional Council Tax Premiums be applied from 1 April 2024, subject to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receiving Royal Assent, and that the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer be granted delegated authority to implement the introduction of these additional premiums when the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receives Royal Assent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for a period of between 1 and 2 years;</li> <li>• 100% premium for second homes.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p><b>Council Tax Support</b></p> <p>Alongside the 2023/24 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement the Government announced £100m Council Tax Support Funding for local authorities to provide further support to households already receiving Council Tax Support. East Suffolk Council has been allocated £404,835. The Government expects local authorities to use the majority of their funding allocations to reduce bills for current working age and pension age Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) claimants by up to £25. Councils can use any remaining allocation as they see fit to support vulnerable households with Council Tax bills. The Council is expected to deliver this using their discretionary powers under s13A(1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and unlike LCTRS there is no requirement for a separate scheme design.</p>
3.6	<p>The following approach is proposed for the distribution of these funds using these discretionary powers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) To apply the required reductions of up to £25 to all current LCTRS claimants to their 2023/24 Council Tax bills</li> <li>(b) To maximise use of the fund by providing additional top up payments of £8 to all current LCTRS claimants to their 2023/24 Council Tax bills so that the overall reduction for each household is £33</li> <li>(c) To provide additional s13A(1) ©Exceptional Hardship Payment (EHP) funding, and for that fund to be used by 31 March 2024 (or until the fund is exhausted) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. support new LCTS claimants with a one-off reduction of £33 to their 2023/24 Council Tax bills, and</li> <li>ii. provide additional support to vulnerable customers via the existing EHP claim form route</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3.7	The approach outlined above is being recommended for adoption by all of the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) authorities, although the amount of top up will vary from authority to

	<p>authority. The Council will monitor expenditure regularly as part of the monitoring requirements and will encourage take up of EHP to help maximise use of the funding. Support will also continue to be available for those who may be economically vulnerable but just outside of the income threshold for LCTRS eligibility through the allocation of s13A(1) (c) awards directly to their Council Tax bills via a separate non-LCTRS claim form route. In accordance with the New Burdens doctrine reasonable administration costs will be funded following a Government assessment later in the year.</p>
3.8	<p>The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that the Spring Budget will be held on 15 March 2023. It is conceivable that further council tax support measures could be announced that would require the Council to use its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. To cover the event of this arising, it is recommended in this report that Council grants the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer delegated authority to award any further reliefs in 2023/24 arising from Government announcements.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Council Tax Base</b></p> <p>At its meeting on 6 December 2022 Cabinet approved the Council Tax Base for 2023/24 for the East Suffolk district is 90,340.92 Band D equivalent properties <b>Appendix A2</b>.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Risk Assessment and Report of The Chief Financial Officer</b></p> <p>Part of the process of delivering a robust medium term strategy to enable the Council to manage its affairs soundly, is to have regard to both external and internal risks, and to identify actions to mitigate those risks. MTFS key principles and a risk analysis together with mitigating actions are provided in <b>Appendix A1</b> of the MTFS.</p>
3.11	<p>In relation to the statutory duty under the Act, the Chief Financial Officer considers that the estimates are robust; the General Fund Balance is within the guideline levels established as part of the MTFS; and the contributions to and use of earmarked reserves will assist the Council in meeting its financial challenges and developing its response to the pandemic and the objective of financial sustainability. The Chief Finance Officer's report is attached as <b>Appendix C</b>.</p>
3.12	<p><b>Pay Policy Statement</b></p> <p>There is a requirement for the Council to compare the policies on remunerating Chief Officers and other employees, and to set out the policy on the lowest paid employees.</p> <p>The interpretation of the meaning of "Chief Officer(s)" as used above in the context of the Pay Policy Statement includes the Chief Executive, the Strategic Directors, the Heads of Service, and the Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>The Council is also required by law to report annually in April, on their gender pay gap and publish this information. This must include mean and median gender pay gaps; the mean and median gender bonus gaps; the proportion of men and women who received bonuses; and the proportions of male and female employees in each pay quartile. The Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 is attached in <b>Appendix D</b>.</p>
3.13	<p><b>Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25</b></p> <p>The predecessor Councils' first Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategies were produced in response to the Statutory Guidance on the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts, originally issued to cover the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. In the 2018/19 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, this was extended for a further three years to April 2022. Subsequently, a further 3-year extension from 2022/23 onwards was announced in the 2022/23 Provisional Local</p>

	Government Finance Settlement. On 4 April 2022, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities confirmed this extension and published Guidance and a Direction.																												
3.14	The Guidance provides the flexibility to local authorities to use capital receipts to fund the revenue set up and implementation costs of projects designed to generate ongoing revenue savings but does not enable ongoing revenue costs to be funded by this method.																												
3.15	The Strategy is attached as <b>Appendix B</b> and includes two key projects identified from the East Suffolk Strategic Plan as being eligible for capital receipts funding. This list is not definitive and further potentially eligible projects could be identified during the course of the year. Full Council on 28 September 2022 approved that the Council carries out whole site master planning for the full North Felixstowe site allocation with the cost of this work up to £1.5m to be funded from capital receipts. This is currently the only project with approval for funding in accordance with the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.																												
3.16	<b>Council Tax</b>  For Shire District Councils in two-tier areas, the referendum limit for 2022/23 was the higher of 2% or £5. In the Provisional Settlement the referendum limit for 2023/24 was changed to the higher of 3% or £5 and this remained as per the Final Settlement. However, this additional flexibility has limited significance for the Council, as 3% on the 2022/23 Band D Council Tax would equate to an increase (divisible by 9) of £5.22, generating additional income of only just over £24,000 compared with the Cabinet recommended increase of £4.95.																												
3.17	In the Key Principles of the MTFs, the Council Tax strategic objective is to “plan for a level of Council Tax that the Council, its residents and Government see as necessary, acceptable and affordable to ensure that it has the financial capacity to deliver the Council’s policies and objectives.”																												
3.18	In considering the budget for 2023/24, the Cabinet proposed that the Council increases its Band D Council Tax to £181.17 an increase of £4.95 (2.81%). This equates to around £0.447m of additional Council Tax income to the Council based on the current District Band D Council Tax of £176.22.																												
3.19	<p>The Council’s Council Tax is only a small proportion of the total Council Tax required to fund all local authority and police services in the East Suffolk area. The following table shows the approved tax to be levied in 2023/24. The Band D tax for Suffolk County Council has been increased by 3.99% and includes a 2.00% increase for the Social Care Precept. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk has recommended an increase of 6.03%. The Council Tax Resolutions are set out in <b>Appendix E</b>.</p> <table><tr><td></td><td><b>2022/23</b> <b>£</b></td><td><b>2023/24</b> <b>£</b></td><td><b>Increase</b> <b>%</b></td></tr><tr><td>East Suffolk Council</td><td>176.22</td><td>181.17</td><td>2.81</td></tr><tr><td>Suffolk County Council</td><td>1,438.92</td><td>1,496.43</td><td>3.99</td></tr><tr><td>Police and Crime Commissioner for</td><td>247.68</td><td>262.62</td><td>6.03</td></tr><tr><td><b>Sub-Total</b></td><td><b>1862.82</b></td><td><b>1,940.22</b></td><td><b>4.15</b></td></tr><tr><td>Town &amp; Parish Councils (average)</td><td>75.81</td><td>78.53</td><td>3.59</td></tr><tr><td><b>Total</b></td><td><b>1,938.63</b></td><td><b>2,018.75</b></td><td><b>4.13</b></td></tr></table>		<b>2022/23</b> <b>£</b>	<b>2023/24</b> <b>£</b>	<b>Increase</b> <b>%</b>	East Suffolk Council	176.22	181.17	2.81	Suffolk County Council	1,438.92	1,496.43	3.99	Police and Crime Commissioner for	247.68	262.62	6.03	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1862.82</b>	<b>1,940.22</b>	<b>4.15</b>	Town & Parish Councils (average)	75.81	78.53	3.59	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,938.63</b>	<b>2,018.75</b>	<b>4.13</b>
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3.20	Special Items - Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides for certain items of expenditure to be treated as ‘special items’ chargeable to part only of the District when setting the Council Tax. The items referred to are:																												



	<p>(a) any precepts issued or anticipated by the Council in calculating its budget requirement believed to be applicable to part of the area; i.e., precepts of Town and Parish Councils;</p> <p>(b) any expenses of the Authority which are its special expenses, and which were included in the budget requirement.</p> <p>The items to be treated as special items in 2023/24 under s35 (2) of the Act are the precepts by Town/Parish Councils and parish meetings.</p>
3.21	<p><b>MTFS Position</b></p> <p>There are prospective activities not yet factored into the MTFS, which have the potential to make inroads into the budget gap towards the end of the MTFS. These include the Council Tax Premium on second homes, expected efficiencies from East Suffolk Services Ltd, and income streams from capital projects.</p> <p>However, despite these factors, and the uncertainty due to local government finance reforms, the range and scale of expenditure and income pressures indicate that a combination of actions will be needed to ensure a longer term sustainable position including a phased use of reserves, maximisation of income, and the achievement of savings.</p>
3.22	<p><b>Retail, Hospitality, and Leisure Rate Reliefs</b></p> <p>The Autumn Budget Statement in 2022 confirmed the continuation of eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties with 75% relief on rates bills up to £110,000 per business for 2023/24 – an increase from 50% from 2022/23. Local authorities are expected to use their discretionary relief powers (under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended) to grant the discount in line with the relevant eligibility criteria. Authorities will be compensated for the cost of granting the discount through a Section 31 Grant from Government.</p> <p>It is proposed to award the new relief for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties with 75% relief on rates bills up to £110,000 per business in 2023/24 under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended in line with the relevant eligibility criteria.</p>
3.23	<p><b>Supporting Small Business scheme (SSB)</b></p> <p>In the Autumn Budget 2022 the Government announced that it would reintroduce Supporting Small Business Relief – this will limit the increase on rates bills to £600 a year for those ratepayers who have had an increase due to full or partial loss of Small Business Rate or Rural Rate Relief.</p> <p>It is proposed to use the Council's discretionary relief powers (under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended) to grant the discount in line with the relevant eligibility criteria. Authorities will be compensated for the cost of granting the discount through a Section 31 Grant from Government.</p>
3.24	<p><b>Discretionary Rate Relief to Charities, Non-Profit Making Organisations, (NPMOs) and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CAS)</b></p> <p>In its Discretionary Rate Relief policy, the Council normally takes into account the value of unrestricted reserves and operating surpluses when determining whether to award reliefs. In this respect, the Council will not generally award reliefs to organisations with significant assets or operating surpluses in excess of £50,000.</p> <p>In 2021/22 and 2022/23, Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) received a number of reviews for this relief where the organisations are above the value of reserves threshold, solely as a result of the receipt of Covid-19 grants in 2020/21 and 2021/22. Many organisations have put any excess funding into restricted reserves to pay for facilities and improvements, but in some cases these</p>

	<p>funds remain in unrestricted reserves. In some instances, the amount potentially lost in relief was broadly equivalent to the amount above the threshold.</p> <p>This could continue to be the position in 2023/24, and consequently it is proposed that in 2023/24, awards of Discretionary Rate Relief to Charities, Non-Profit Making Organisations, (NPMOs) and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CAS) continue to disregard the value of Covid-19 Grant funding from the value of unrestricted reserves and operating surpluses, so as not to deprive these organisations of this source of funding as a result of the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic.</p>
3.25	<p>The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that the Spring Budget will be held on 15 March 2023. It is conceivable that further rate relief measures could be announced that would require the Council to use its discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. To cover the event of this arising, it is recommended in this report that Council grants the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer delegated authority to award any further reliefs in 2023/24 arising from Government announcements.</p>

## 4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	To bring together all the relevant information to enable Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's General Fund revenue budgets.
4.2	The Council is required to set a balanced budget for the following financial year and to agree the Council Tax for 2023/24.
4.3	To implement Council tax Support for 2023/24.
4.3	To approve the award of a range of Discretionary Rate Reliefs in 2023/24.
4.4	To seek wider Member consideration of the forward budgets beyond 2023/24, and Council Tax proposals in this report to balance the budget for 2023/24 and future years.

## Appendices

Appendices:	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Medium Term Financial Strategy(February 2023)
<b>Appendix A1</b>	MTFS Key Principles and Risk Analysis
<b>Appendix A2</b>	East Suffolk Council Tax Base 2023/24
<b>Appendix A3</b>	NHB Reserve Summary 2022/23 to 2026/27
<b>Appendix A4</b>	MTFS Key Changes Analysis by Strategic Theme/Other Factors
<b>Appendix A5</b>	General Fund Revenue Budget Summary 2022/23 to 2026/27
<b>Appendix A6</b>	Financial Provision to Support the Council's Green Agenda - Caring for Our Environment
<b>Appendix A7</b>	General Fund Reserve Summary 2022/23 to 2026/27
<b>Appendix A8</b>	DLUHC - Policy Statement on Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 and 2024/25
<b>Appendix A9</b>	Provisional Local Government Settlement 19 December 2022
<b>Appendix B</b>	Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25
<b>Appendix C</b>	Report by the Chief Finance Officer 2023/24
<b>Appendix D</b>	Pay Policy Statement 2023/24



<b>Appendix E</b>	Council Tax Resolutions 2023/24
<b>Appendix E1</b>	Special Items – Parish Precepts and Special Expenses
<b>Appendix E2</b>	Amounts of Council Tax 2023/24
<b>Appendix F</b>	Residents Survey Results – 2022
<b>Appendix G</b>	Scrutiny Committee Pre-meeting Questions Submitted
<b>Appendix H</b>	Extract from Unconfirmed Minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023

### Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
03/11/2022	Bank of England Monetary Policy Report – November 2022	<a href="#">Monetary Policy Report - November 2022   Bank of England</a>
17/11/2022	Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2022	<a href="#">Chancellor delivers plan for stability, growth and public services - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
17/11/2022	Office for Budget Responsibility - Economic and fiscal outlook – November 2022	<a href="#">Economic and fiscal outlook - November 2022 - Office for Budget Responsibility (obr.uk)</a>
12/12/2022	DLUHC - Policy Statement on Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 and 2024/25	<a href="#">Local government finance policy statement 2023-24 to 2024-25 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
19/12/2022	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24	<a href="#">Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
06/02/2023	Final Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24	<a href="#">Final local government finance settlement: England, 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>



## **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24 – 2026/27**

**FEBRUARY 2023**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The **Medium-Term Financial Strategy** (MTFS) sets the strategic financial direction for the Council. It sets out the key financial management principles, budget assumptions and service issues.
- 1.2 The MTFS provides a framework for the detailed budget setting process to ensure that resources are managed effectively and can deliver the aspirations of the Council as set out in the Strategic Plan. It provides a sound basis for planning and decision making, and is reviewed and updated at the following key points in the year:
- November/December – as a framework for initial detailed budget discussions for the forthcoming financial year.
  - January – an update to include additional information received at a national level and corporate issues identified through service planning and the detailed budget build.
  - February – with the final Budget for the new financial year.
- 1.3 The vision of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan is to “deliver the highest quality of life possible for everyone who lives in, works in and visits East Suffolk.” The MTFS underpins the new plan and vision for East Suffolk, focussing on five key themes.
- Growing Our Economy
  - Enabling Our Communities
  - Remaining Financially Sustainable
  - Delivering Digital Transformation
  - Caring For Our Environment
- 1.4 The MTFS provides an integrated view of the Council’s finances, recognising that the allocation and management of its human, financial and physical resources play a key role in delivering its priorities and ensuring that the Council works effectively with its partners locally, regionally, and nationally.
- 1.5 The key underlying principles of the MTFS are:
- securing a balanced budget with reduced reliance on the use of reserves and general balances to support its everyday spending;
  - setting modest increases in Council Tax when appropriate; and
  - delivering service efficiencies and generating additional income where there are opportunities to do so.
- 1.6 Part of the process of delivering a robust MTFS to enable the Council to manage its affairs soundly, is to have regard to both external and internal risks, and to identify actions to mitigate those risks. MTFS key principles and a risk analysis together with mitigating actions are provided in **Appendix A1**.
- 1.7 Sections 2 to 4 provide an update on the financial challenges facing the Council, considering the economic factors, the local government finance environment, and the Council’s key funding streams. Sections 5 to 7 outline how the Council will respond to the challenges, as expressed in terms of its Budget and strategies towards reserves and capital.

## **2 PUBLIC FINANCES**

- 2.1 On 23 September 2022 the Chancellor delivered a Mini-Budget/Growth Plan 2022. There were also several other policy announcements that are relevant to the Council's financial position, including the reversal of the Health and Social Care Levy and the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. No measures were announced in respect of the Council's key income streams of Council Tax or Business Rates, nor on any specific details regarding Government departmental spending, of which local government finance forms a part.
- 2.2 A statement by the Chancellor on 17 October 2022, reversed some of the measures announced in the Mini Budget, and brought forward several the measures from the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan scheduled for 17 November, to support fiscal sustainability. There were no announcements which changed the Council's financial position.
- 2.3 On the 17 November, the Chancellor delivered the full Medium-Term Financial Plan alongside the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast. The Chancellor set out the priorities for stability, growth and public service. Tackling inflation is a top priority for the Government and protecting the most vulnerable through the cost of living crisis. The Chancellor also announced commitment to key infrastructure projects such as Sizewell C and a support package for business rate payers in England. This includes, protecting businesses from rising inflation and to help businesses adjust to the revaluation of properties which takes effect from April 2023.

## **3 ECONOMIC INDICATORS**

- 3.1 The national economic background affects the costs the Council incurs, the funding it receives, and contributes to the demand for services as residents are affected by economic circumstances. The inflation rate impacts the cost of services to the Council, as the Council delivers much of its service provision through contractual arrangements where inflationary pressures must be negotiated and managed. Specific contractual inflation has been incorporated into the Council's financial position, where appropriate, based on the actual contractual indices.
- 3.2 Following the pandemic, the UK economy is being impacted by a series of other events, including rising energy costs, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a labour shortage, and UK fiscal policy and financial market turbulence.
- 3.3 The OBR economic and fiscal outlook and forecast published on 17 November provides an independent judgement about the economic and fiscal prospects and impact of the Government's policies. Rising prices continue to erode real wages and reduce living standards by 7% in total over the two financial years to 2023/24 (wiping out the previous eight years' growth), despite over £100 billion of additional government support. The squeeze on real incomes, rising interest rates, and a fall in house prices all weigh on consumption and investment, with the Bank of England reporting that the UK is set to enter recession this year. However, this is expected to be shorter and less severe than previously expected.

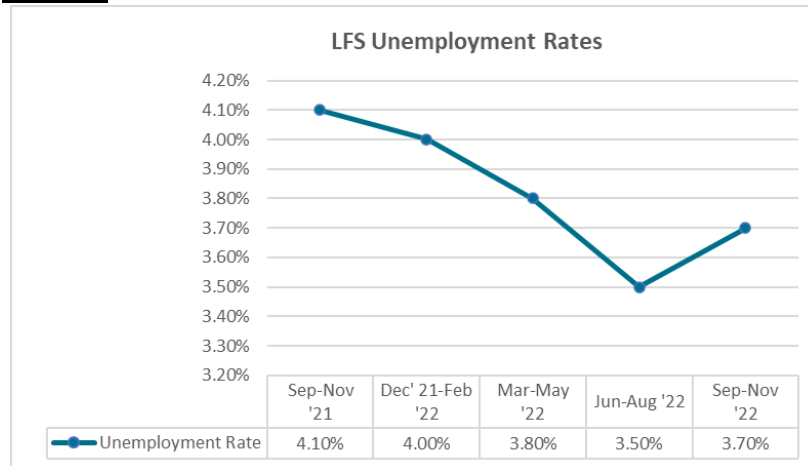
### **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

- 3.4 Data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), shows GDP fell by 0.3% in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared to the previous three months. Revised estimated from the ONS show that UK GDP is now 0.8% below its pre-pandemic level.

## Unemployment

- 3.5 As per the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS), the unemployment rate of England was 3.7% in the three months to November 2022, compared with 3.5% in the previous three months. This latest figure is also 0.3% below pre-pandemic levels. **Figure 1** below show the three months LFS since November 2021 to November 2022. Unemployment is expected to peak at 4.9% in the third quarter of 2024.

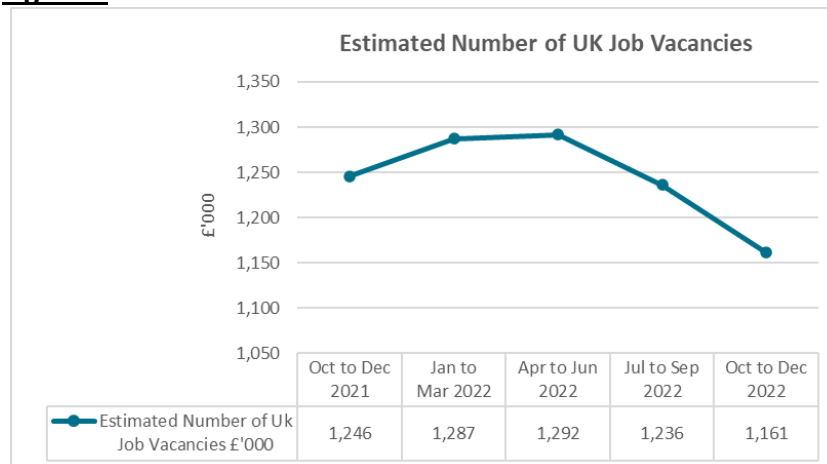
**Figure 1**



Source: ONS January 2023

- 3.6 As per the ONS, in October to December 2022 the estimated number of job vacancies in the UK was 1,161,000. Compared to July to September 2022, this was a decrease of 75,000. In October to December 2022, vacancies remain 365,000 above the pre-pandemic level (January to March 2020) and 85,000 down from the level one year ago. This is illustrated in **Figure 2** below.

**Figure 2**

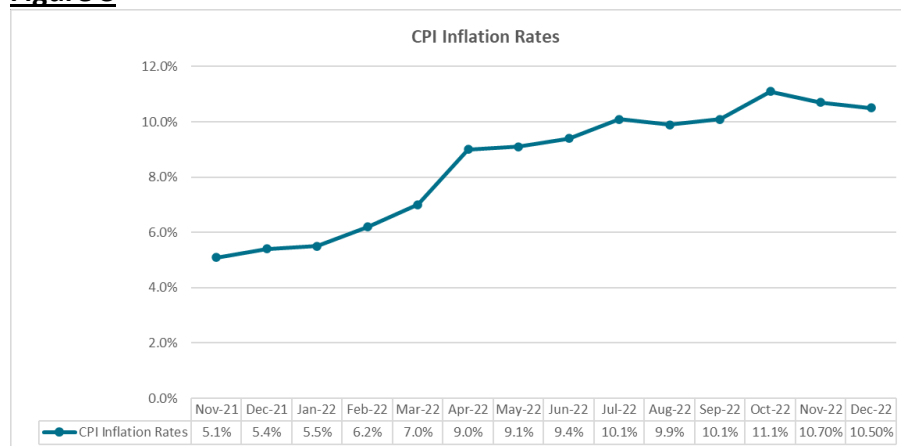


Source: ONS January 2023

## Consumer Pricing Index (CPI)

- 3.7 Twelve-month CPI inflation fell from 10.7% in November 2022 to 10.5% in December 2022. The Bank of England projects CPI inflation to fall sharply to around 4% towards the end of this year. This is largely due to past increases in energy costs and other goods prices falling out of the calculation of the annual rate. It expects inflation to fall to the official target of 2% in the medium term. **Figure 3** below shows the CPI rates from November 2021 to date.

**Figure 3**



Source: ONS January 2023

## Bank Interest Rate

- 3.8 At its meeting ending on 1 February 2023, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted by a majority of 7-2 to increase the bank rate by 0.50% to 4.0%. This is the tenth increase in a row. The bank rate is expected to rise further in 2023, to around 4.5% by mid-year before falling to just over 3.25% in three years' time.

## 4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

- 4.1 The introduction of the Local Business Rates Retention System in 2013/14, together with the Government's programme of fiscal consolidation since 2010, have combined to both reduce the level of funding available to the Council, and to shift the balance of funding significantly away from central to local sources.
- 4.2 The Spending Review 2021, which covered 2022/23 to 2024/25 was broadly positive for local government, with funding better than expected. Increased funding was largely front loaded with growth in grant funding in 2022/23 and no further general increases in the following two years. There were various smaller allocations within the core funding announcement, including £200m for the "cross-government Supporting Families programme", £37.8m for cyber security and £34.5m for "strengthen local delivery and transparency".
- 4.3 On the 17 November 2022 the Chancellor announced the Autumn Statement, alongside the updated forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The indication at the time was for all existing grant funding to be protected in cash terms in 2023/24 and 2024/25, and then to grow by 1% per year in real terms for the following three years. It was also unlikely that there would be any additional support for inflationary pressures. This was superseded by the DLUHC policy statement on 12 December and the Final Local Government Finance Settlement on 6 February 2023.
- 4.4 On 12 December DLUHC published a policy statement on Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 and 2024/25. This is provided in **Appendix A8**, and sets out the intention for Business Rates, Council Tax, and settlement grants. The Policy Statement also notes reserve balances held by some local authorities have increased significantly in recent years, and local authorities are encouraged to consider using reserves to maintain services under the current inflationary pressures. This provided a strong indication of what local authorities could expect from the Provisional Finance Settlement. The Provisional Settlement for 2023/24 was released on 19 December and a summary of this is provide in **Appendix A9**. The 2024/25 Finance Settlement is likely to continue in a

similar manner and this is reflected in the MTFS detailed in Sections 4.5 to 4.11 below. The 2023/24 Final Settlement was received on 6 February 2023. For East Suffolk, changes between the Provisional and Final Settlement show a re-allocation of funding from the Funding Guarantee to the Rural Services Delivery Grant and the Services Grant, with no overall net change on the total funding to be received by the Council.

- 4.5 **Core Funding Streams** – this includes the Revenue Support Grant and the Rural Services Delivery Grant.

#### **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)**

- 4.6 It was assumed following the Autumn Statement that there would be no increase to RSG for the next two years. However, the DLUHC Policy Statement issued on 12 December indicated RSG increasing in line with CPI for 2023/24. Based on September CPI this would be an increase of 10.1%, £0.034m. This was also confirmed in the Settlement. For 2023/24 two grants have been rolled into RSG. This is the Local Council Tax Administration Grant (£0.268m) and the Family Annexe Council Tax Grant (£0.061m). Both Grants are currently received by the Council separate and are not new grants. It is currently assumed that the RSG grant (excluding the rolled in grants) will remain at the current level of £0.340m for 2024/25, and a 1% increase thereafter. This is a slight downward adjustment from the original assumption of a 2% annual increase.

Revenue Support Grant	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
MTFS (February 2022)	(340)	(346)	(353)	(360)	(360)
MTFS (February 2023)	(340)	(703)	(340)	(343)	(347)
<b>MTFS Update (February 2023)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(357)</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>

#### **Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG)**

- 4.7 The Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG) is a government grant recognising cost pressures associated with service delivery in rural sparse areas. The Provisional Settlement indicated no change to RSDG in 2023/24 but the Final Settlement increased this grant to £0.291m. The assumption for future years is to remain at the current level for 2024/25, followed by a 1% increase thereafter.

Rural Services Delivery Grant	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
MTFS (February 2022)	(260)	(266)	(271)	(276)	(276)
MTFS (February 2023)	(260)	(291)	(260)	(263)	(265)
<b>MTFS Update (February 2023)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>

- 4.8 **Non-Core Funding Streams** - the below grants are non-core funding streams and they are usually seen as temporary or one-off. This potentially gives the Government scope to make changes to funding distributions.

#### **Lower Tier Services Grant (LTSG)**

- 4.9 The Lower Tier Services Grant (LTSG) was referred to as a one-off grant in 2021/22 to support local authorities with the pressures of Covid. However, it did continue into 2022/23 but at a reduced amount of £0.311m from £0.389m. The DLUHC December Policy Statement indicated that this grant would be repurposed for 2023/24 in recognition of the inflationary pressures across local authorities. This was confirmed in the Provisional and Final Settlement where this grant has been abolished and repurposed towards a new

funding stream for 2023/24, the Funding Guarantee Allocation. This is detailed in Section 4.11 below. The MTFS has been updated to reflect this.

Lower Tier Services Grant (LTSG)	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
MTFS (February 2022)	(311)	(311)	(311)	(311)	(311)
MTFS (February 2023)	(311)	0	0	0	0
<b>MTFS Update February 2023)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>311</b>

### Services Grant

- 4.10 As with the LTSG, although this funding would not appear under this name, it could be expected to feature in some form when the local government finance system is reformed. For 2022/23 the Local Government Finance Settlement included a new one-off Services Grant and the Council received £0.477m. The Government indicated that the grant would provide funding to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services, including social care, delivered at every level of local government. It also included funding for local government costs for the introduction of the Health and Social Care Levy but which has now been reversed from 6 November 2022. Until the Provisional Settlement, it was unclear if and how, the Government intended to address this reversal through the funding streams. As per the Final Settlement this grant has been reduced for 2023/24 by £0.197m from the current level of £0.477m.

Services Grant/Transition Funding	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
MTFS (February 2022)	(477)	(477)	(477)	(477)	(477)
MTFS (February 2023)	(477)	(280)	(269)	(269)	(269)
<b>MTFS Update (February 2023)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>208</b>

### Funding Guarantee Allocation

- 4.11 In the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, the Government announced repurposing the Lower Tier Services Grant and a proportion of the expired New Homes Bonus legacy payments to ensure that all Councils will see at least a 3% increase in Core Spending Power before any decisions about organisational efficiencies, use of reserves or Council Tax levels. This has been confirmed in the Final Settlement for East Suffolk, with an allocation of £1.512m for 2023/24. The MTFS assumes a continuation of this support by £1.5m per annum. From 2024/25 this assumption takes into consideration the abolition of the Lower Tier Services Grant and a reduction to the Services Grant. Overall, the net increase in funding to East Suffolk is £1m in 2024/25 and £0.5m in 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Funding Guarantee Allocation	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
MTFS (February 2022)	0	0	0	0	0
MTFS (February 2023)	0	(1,512)	(1,519)	(1,519)	(1,519)
<b>MTFS Update (February 2023)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,512)</b>	<b>(1,519)</b>	<b>(1,519)</b>	<b>(1,519)</b>

### Business Rates – Business Rates Retention and Fair Funding Review

- 4.12 In its 2015 Spending Review, the Government announced proposals for Councils to retain all locally raised Business Rates by the end of the decade, and to end the distribution of core grant from central Government. In December 2017, the Government announced proposals for the proportion of business rates income to be retained by the local authority sector to be increased from the current 50% to 75% from April 2020, a development which



does not require primary legislation, unlike the move to 100% local retention. Due to Covid-19, this was also delayed, and it has now been announced that this move to 75% retention has been abandoned.

- 4.13 The Government also announced a Fair Funding Review in February 2016, which will affect how funding is allocated and redistributed between local authorities. Implementation of this review was also delayed and as referred to above is now likely to be implemented in 2025/26 at the earliest.
- 4.14 Implementation of the Fair Funding Review is likely to include a 'reset' of the business rates system, which would involve assigning a new baseline funding level and subsequent new tariff or top-up values. Reset of the system and the establishment of new funding formulae could result in East Suffolk Council losing some of the financial advantage that it has under the current system. As a result of the delay in implementing Business Rates reforms, the Council has benefited from additional years under the current regime including 2022/23. Following the Autumn Statement, the indications are that there will be no changes or reset of the system for 2023/24 and 2024/25. This base assumption has been rolled forward in the MTFS and the figures presented in paragraph 4.20 below.

### **Business Rates**

- 4.15 Since 2013/14, business rates income has tended to be characterised by a high degree of volatility and uncertainty. Variances between estimated and actual business rate income are realised in the form of deficits or surpluses on the business rates element of the Collection Fund. For each year, the amount of business rates income credited to the General Fund is the amount estimated on the National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR1) return to Government submitted in January in the preceding year, including a calculation of the estimated Collection Fund deficit or surplus to be charged to the General Fund. As a result, in practice, variances between business rates estimates and actual figures are reflected as an element of the Collection Fund deficit or surplus two years after they take place.
- 4.16 **Business Rates Collection Fund** - As a result of Covid-19, there was a considerably larger-than-normal deficit on the 2021/22 Collection Fund for Business Rates as changes to Retail and Nursery relief were announced after the NNDR1 was submitted in January 2021. These reliefs were paid to precepting authorities in the form of additional Section 31 Grant in 2021/22. Local authorities estimated the deficit in January 2022 and budgeted for it in 2022/23. Additional reliefs for businesses were also awarded in respect of 2021/22 under the Covid Additional Restrictions Fund (CARF), which was funded by Section 31 Grant amounting to around £7.9m.
- 4.17 On 5 November 2020 the Local Authorities (Collection Fund: Surplus and Deficit) (Coronavirus) (England) Regulations 2020 were laid before Parliament and came into force on 1 December 2020. The regulations implement the announcement made by the Secretary of State on 2 July 2020 that "the repayment of collection fund deficits arising in 2020/21, will be spread over the next three years rather than the usual period of a year, giving councils breathing space in setting budgets for next year." Therefore, the final third of that deficit is shown in 2023/24.
- 4.18 The Business Rates Collection Fund position over the past couple of years has been complicated by a range of measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and timing differences relating to grant funding in respect of these. The Government funded a range of reliefs by Section 31 Grant, which was accounted for by the Council in 2021/22, but the Collection Fund deficit impacted on the Council's own budget in 2022/23. Consequently, the Council's share of this Section 31 Grant, was contributed to the Covid Reserve in

2021/22, enabling the Council to meet its share of the deficit in 2022/23. This position is illustrated in the table below. These deficits will be entirely funded from the Covid Reserve, i.e., the associated Section 31 Grant received and transferred to the reserve.

Business Rates Collection Fund – Deficit/(Surplus)	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
MTFS (February 2022)	6,393	785	0	0	0
MTFS (February 2023)	6,393	(981)	0	0	0
<b>MTFS Update (February 2023)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,766)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

- 4.19 Suffolk Pool – In October all Suffolk councils agreed to continue a pooling arrangement for 2023/24, which would allow them to retain a larger proportion of their share of growth by reducing the overall levy rate for Suffolk to £nil. Suffolk County Council is the administering authority for the Pool and collates the NNDR1 returns of all of the Suffolk authorities. The MTFS includes a Pooling Benefit estimate for 2022/23 of £2.04m. Following the completion of the NNDR1 return for 2023/24, the estimated Pooling Benefit for next year is £2.0m. The MTFS includes a reduced Pooling Benefit estimate for 2024/25 of £1.0m, reflecting some current uncertainty in the system as referred to below.
- 4.20 Business Rates income for 2023/24 is based on the NNDR1 return. As referred to earlier, the Business Rates system may be subject to reform in 2025/26, with the changes potentially not impacting as seriously as previously forecast. In light of the impending reform, the approach that has been taken is to roll forward the estimates for 2023/24 through to 2026/27, with the exception being a tapering of the Pooling Benefit estimate. This is to reflect a cautious approach to the overall Business Rates income position in the latter years of the MTFS. As can be seen in the table below, 2023/24 shows a significantly improved position on Business Rates income than previously reported. Inflation in the system and the interaction between business rates income next year and the 2023 Revaluation adjustment have been the primary reasons for this, and it is uncertain if there will be some clawback in 2024/25. This position will not become clear until the NNDR1 for 2024/25 is completed in January 2024. To plan for mitigating this, the surplus income from Business Rates, over and above addressing the budget gap for next year, has been transferred to the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve. This amounts to £2.46m and increases the balance on this reserve to £17.5m as at 31 March 2024. The MTFS assumption is that the Council will continue to retain 100% Business Rates income from Renewables, and this has been reflected in the table below. It is also worth noting that even if the current treatment of existing Renewables is revised, new Renewable hereditaments will be coming online during the MTFS period.

Business Rates Income	Original 2022/23 £'000	Revised 2022/23 £'000	Estimate 2023/24 £'000	Estimate 2024/25 £'000	Estimate 2025/26 £'000	Estimate 2026/27 £'000
Business Rates Income	(6,158)	(6,158)	(6,852)	(6,852)	(6,852)	(6,852)
Business Rates Renewables	(1,203)	(1,203)	(1,560)	(1,560)	(1,560)	(1,560)
<b>Total Business Rates Income</b>	<b>(7,361)</b>	<b>(7,361)</b>	<b>(8,412)</b>	<b>(8,412)</b>	<b>(8,412)</b>	<b>(8,412)</b>
Share of Pooling Benefit	(1,861)	(2,035)	(2,000)	(1,000)	0	0
Section 31 Grant	(8,655)	(11,569)	(10,677)	(10,677)	(10,677)	(10,677)
<b>Total Income Relating to Business Rates</b>	<b>(17,877)</b>	<b>(20,965)</b>	<b>(21,089)</b>	<b>(20,089)</b>	<b>(19,089)</b>	<b>(19,089)</b>
<b>MTFS Update (February 2023)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,088)</b>	<b>(8,165)</b>	<b>(6,907)</b>	<b>(5,643)</b>	<b>(5,643)</b>

## Council Tax

Council Tax is one of the Council's most important and stable income streams, funding approximately 40% of the net budget requirement of the Council. For Shire District Councils in two-tier areas, the referendum limit for 2022/23 was the higher of 2% or £5. The Autumn Statement confirmed additional flexibility for Council Tax increases for 2023/24, by increasing the referendum limit from 2% to 3%, but the £5 threshold remains.

- 4.21 **Council Tax Base** – The CTB1 Council Tax Base Return was submitted to Government on 5 October 2022.
- 4.22 The increase in the tax base for East Suffolk is currently estimated to be 1,317.49 (1.48%) Band D equivalent properties, increasing the overall tax base for East Suffolk from 89,023.43 to 90,340.92 for 2023/24. This equates to around £0.232m of additional Council Tax income to the Council based on the current District Band D Council Tax of £176.22.
- 4.23 The 2023/24 Council Tax Base at **Appendix A2** was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 December 2022.
- 4.24 **District Band D Council Tax 2023/24** – An increase of £4.95 for 2023/24 would equate to a District Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk of £181.17 and generate approximately £0.447m of additional income for East Suffolk. Total income to the Council from Council Tax would be £16.37m.
- 4.25 Based on the above data, the table below sets out the estimated Council Tax income and current assumptions for Council Tax. The District Band D Council tax for 2023/24, does not assume maximising use of the increased flexibility. This would be an increase of £5.22 compared to £4.95, an increase of £0.27p. This would generate an additional £0.024m of Council Tax income for East Suffolk.

Council Tax Income	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	Estimate 2024/25 £'000	Estimate 2025/26 £'000	Estimate 2026/27 £'000
<b>Council Tax Income - Base</b>	(14,959)	(15,688)	(16,368)	(16,882)	(17,400)
<b>Growth in Tax Base</b>	(288)	(232)	(65)	(67)	(69)
<b>Council Tax Increase</b>	(441)	(447)	(449)	(451)	(453)
<b>Total Council Tax Income</b>	<b>(15,688)</b>	<b>(16,367)</b>	<b>(16,882)</b>	<b>(17,400)</b>	<b>(17,922)</b>
<b>Council Tax Band D</b>	£176.22	£181.17	£186.12	£191.07	£196.02
<b>Council Tax Base</b>	89,023.43	90,340.92	90,702.28	91,065.09	91,429.35
<b>Growth/Reduction(-) in Tax Base</b>	1.93%	1.48%	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%
<b>Council Tax Increase £</b>	£4.95	£4.95	£4.95	£4.95	£4.95
<b>Council Tax Increase %</b>	2.89%	2.81%	2.73%	2.66%	2.59%

*Assumptions from 2024/25: Council Tax increases of 2% or £5, whichever is the higher.*

- 4.26 The February 2022 MTFs for 2023/24 had assumed growth to the tax base of 0.92% compared to the updated position of 1.48%. This additional growth of 0.56% is just under £0.090m of additional income. From 2024/25 a cautious approach continues to be taken to growth in the overall tax base and this is forecast at a lower rate of 0.4%. This is a combination of completion of development sites levelling off, and prudent assumptions regarding Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) reliefs and collection rates. The below table shows the update to the MTFs.

MTFS - Council Tax Income	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	Estimate 2024/25 £'000	Estimate 2025/26 £'000	Estimate 2026/27 £'000
MTFS February 2022	(15,688)	(16,277)	(16,789)	(17,302)	(17,302)
MTFS February 2023	(15,688)	(16,367)	(16,882)	(17,400)	(17,922)
MTFS Update February 2023	(0)	(90)	(93)	(98)	(620)

4.27 **Council Tax Collection Fund** – The Council Tax Collection Fund for 2023/24 is a surplus of £2.65m, with East Suffolk's share equating to £0.344m. The remaining balance of the surplus is shared by Suffolk County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk.

4.28 Regulations were implemented on 1 December 2020 that the repayment Collection Fund deficits arising in 2020/21, will be spread over three years from 2021/22 to 2023/24 rather than the usual period of a year. Both the 2022/23 and 2023/24 figures include a deficit figure of £0.032m - the Council's share of the deficit.

4.29 The Council's share of the Council Tax Deficit for 2022/23 and 2023/24 is profiled over the MTFS as follows;

Council Tax Collection Fund – Deficit/(Surplus)	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Deficit/(Surplus) (February 2022)	(223)	32	0	0	0
Deficit/(Surplus) (February 2023)	(223)	(344)	0	0	0
MTFS Update (February 2023)	0	(376)	0	0	0

4.30 **Council Tax Premium on Second Homes** - The Government is proposing that billing authorities will have the power to charge a 100% premium on second homes or empty dwellings. The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill would give billing authorities the power to charge a 100% premium on "dwellings occupied periodically". A determination would have to be "made at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates." Assuming receipt of Royal assent in early 2023, authorities should be able to use the premium from 2024/25 at the earliest. At its meeting on 25 January 2023, Full Council approve this in principle, subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent.

4.31 Given the number of second homes in Suffolk, this 100% council tax premium should represent a significant addition to the income stream from Council Tax. Based on current information and council tax levels, this could yield additional income of just under £11.2m in Suffolk, the bulk of which is in East Suffolk. In East Suffolk, over £7.6m could be generated – around £5.9m for Suffolk County Council, over £1m for Suffolk Police, and over £0.70m for East Suffolk Council. The current MTFS does not take account of this potential additional income for East Suffolk Council.

### **New Homes Bonus (NHB)**

4.32 The Government established the New Homes Bonus (NHB) in 2011 to provide an incentive for local authorities to encourage housing growth in their areas. NHB is funding allocated to councils based on the building of new homes and bringing empty homes back into use. The intention for the New Homes Bonus is to ensure that the economic benefits of growth are returned to the local authorities and communities where growth takes place. Over the past few years, NHB has become an extremely important source of incentivised income.

- 4.33 In recent years there has been much uncertainty as to the future of NHB, with the last three years (2020/21 to 2022/23) being a one-year settlement.
- 4.34 There has been no announcement following a consultation paper in early 2021 to provide an indication as to the future of NHB, whether it will disappear completely or continue in a different form. The Final Settlement provides a further one-year only NHB allocation for 2023/24. This amounts to £0.447m for the Council and is unchanged from the Provisional Settlement.

NHB	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Year 7	0	0
Year 8	0	0
Year 9 (Final legacy payment)	(525)	0
Year 10	0	0
Year 11	0	0
Year 12 (one-year only - actual)	(1,124)	0
Year 13 (one-year only – estimate)	0	(447)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(1,649)</b>	<b>(447)</b>

- 4.35 The Council uses NHB funding to support specific community related projects and initiatives across East Suffolk. This is balanced against the overriding need to retain financial sustainability. NHB funding is transferred to the NHB reserve and released when required.
- 4.36 **Appendix A3** sets out the current position on the NHB Reserve and the proposed use of NHB funding for East Suffolk Council. This is summarised in the table below.

NHB Reserve	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Opening Balance	(5,580)	(4,857)	(3,827)	(2,457)	(1,205)
Add: Allocation Received	(1,649)	(447)	0	0	0
Less: Proposed Use	2,372	1,477	1,370	1,252	1,053
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>(4,857)</b>	<b>(3,827)</b>	<b>(2,457)</b>	<b>(1,205)</b>	<b>(152)</b>

## 5 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL POSITION

### MTFS Forecasts 2022/23 to 2026/27

- 5.1 The Finance team works with Service Areas to review their budget requirements and budget monitoring is an ongoing process between Finance, Service Areas, and the Corporate Management Team. This work leads to continual updating of the MTFS for the Council.
- 5.2 The below items are highlighted as having potential revenue budget implications for this financial year and over the MTFS period but cannot yet be quantified or quantified with a degree of certainty, i.e., figures are currently being worked on and/or insufficient information available.

Budget Area to be Monitored	Areas Impact	Nature of Impact	Timing of Impact
Inflationary pressures.	Utility costs, insurance premiums, fuel, and contract costs, and Operations services (Norse/ESSL).	Increased running costs of Council property and services, and delivery of projects.	Current year and future years. Difficult to estimate the duration and level of continued impact from 2023/24.
Workforces pay pressure/grade inflation.	Council staffing costs and Operations services (Norse/ESSL).	Increased staffing costs.	Impact being seen in the current year. Uncertainty over the level of pay awards for the next two years.
Recruitment difficulties.	Particularly areas of specialism.	Agency/contractor support has been required which can be more costly.	Impact being seen in the current year.
Planning applications.	Planning fee income	Reduced income due to economic climate.	Current year is running in line with the budget for the year to date. Future years could be impacted due to downturn in the economy.
Non-core Government funding, e.g., Lower Tier Services Grant and Services Grant.	General Fund.	Loss or reduction of non-core funding which will impact the General Fund.	The 2023/24 Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed a reduction to non-core funding but this was more than compensated by a new Funding Guarantee Allocation. This needs to be monitored for future years.
Felixstowe Dock strike action.	Port Health Account.	Loss of income. Currently estimated at £0.014m per strike day. 16 days so far this year.	Impact in the current year.

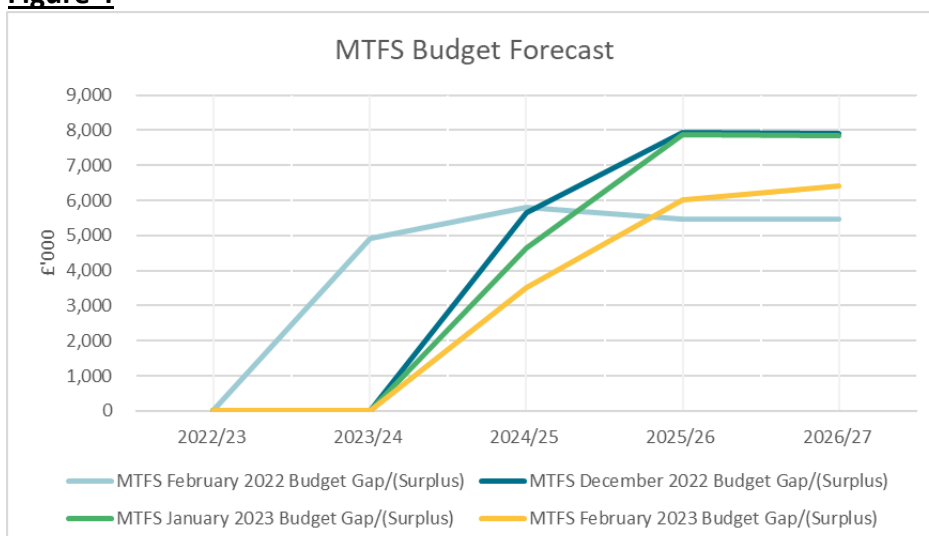
- 5.3 A summary analysis of the key budget movements from February 2022 to February 2023 is shown in the following table. This table is supported by **Appendix A4**.

MTFS Key Updates	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Additional Cost	3,605	5,413	7,469	8,907	9,902
Additional Income	(1,013)	(12,417)	(8,663)	(7,411)	(7,934)
Reduced Income	1,300	1,975	1,300	1,300	1,300
Saving	(300)	(2,240)	(2,300)	(2,345)	(2,420)
Use of Reserves	(3,592)	2,361	(100)	100	100
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4,908)</b>	<b>(2,294)</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>948</b>

- 5.4 **Appendix A4** also provides a visual analysis of the key updates across the MTFS period by Strategic Theme/Other Factors that primarily required the MTFS to be updated and have a net impact on the budget position.

- 5.5 **Appendix A5**, provides an overall summary of the General Fund Budgets as at February 2023.
- 5.6 **Figure 4** below shows the movement in the MTFS budget forecast during the budget setting process. A balanced budget for the current year has been achieved by the use of £1.105m from a Risk Based Reserve. Due to the additional income from Business Rates in 2023/24, a balance budget has been possible for next year without using reserves to fund a budget gap.

**Figure 4**



MTFS Position	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
MTFS February 2022 Budget Gap/(Surplus)	0	4,908	5,805	5,457	5,457
MTFS December 2022 Budget Gap/(Surplus)	0	0	5,660	7,940	7,902
MTFS January 2023 Budget Gap/(Surplus)	0	0	4,629	7,890	7,837
MTFS February 2023 Budget Gap/(Surplus)	0	0	3,511	6,008	6,405

### Budget Planning Assumptions

- 5.7 The Council's financial planning assumptions are summarised below:

Budget Area	Assumption
<b>Inflation</b>	
<i>Goods &amp; Services</i>	Met within existing budgets where possible (exception is contract).
<i>Utilities (Electricity)</i>	2022/23 revised based on actuals, 2023/24 80% of 2022/23 budgets, future years maintain at the 2023/24 budget.
<i>Utilities (Gas)</i>	2023/24 20% increase on 2022/23 revised estimates, future years maintain at the 2023/24 budget.
<i>Utilities (water &amp; Sewage)</i>	2023/24 11% increase, 2024/25 5% increase, 2025/26 and 2026/27 1% increase. Commercial rates are set in April. Assumptions based on the CPI forecasts as per the Bank of England Monetary Policy Report November 2022.
<b>Fees &amp; Charges</b>	5% increase is applied where appropriate.
<b>Staffing Costs</b>	2022/23 Current offer of an additional £1,925 on all SCP 1 and above, 2023/24 4% increase, plus incremental progression, 2024/25 3% increase, plus incremental progression, 2025/26 onwards 2% increase, plus incremental progression.

	4% per annum of staffing costs for vacancy allowance.
<b>Investment Income</b>	1.37% Term Investments (average as of September 2022) 2.15% Call Account (September 2022) 1.73% Money Market Fund (September 2022) 3.40% Property Fund (September 2022) 4.05% Diversified Income Fund (September 2022)

### **Goods & Services – Inflationary Pressures**

- 5.8 Over the course of the last six months, the Council's MTFS had been significantly impacted by inflation, and to a much higher extent than originally forecast in the early part of the year. This is particularly evident with utility costs which are forecast to increase by 100% for the Council in the current year, in addition to pressure on the Council's leisure centres. The trajectory for utility costs over the MTFS period is difficult to forecast, but it has been assumed that costs will remain high, with no significant fall from the current level. The total estimated impact of rising utility costs over the MTFS period is £3.1m. Inflation is also feeding through to insurance premiums and these are forecast to rise by around £0.150m per annum, with a total impact over the MTFS of £0.670m. As with the assumption for utility costs, insurance premiums are not forecast to fall in the short to medium term.
- 5.9 The Council's Operations service has also been significantly impacted by inflation through rising fuel costs and also national and local pay settlements. The average price of a litre of diesel in 2022/23 is £1.44, compared to £1.12 in 2021/22, an increase of 29%. This is an increase in diesel costs of between £0.200m to £0.300m, based on current year usage levels.
- 5.10 The Council's financial strategy assumes that any inflationary pressures incurred on goods and services expenditure are contained within existing budgets, or through more efficient spending. However, given the extent of these pressures this is becoming an increasing more challenging strategy to implement.
- 5.11 Inflationary pressures on projects within the Capital Programme, indirectly impacts on revenue, through revenue costs to support projects and the revenue financing of capital.
- 5.12 Contracts have been inflated based on the specified inflation indices within each individual contract. Additional negotiation has taken place with contractors to determine how these cost increases can be reduced where possible. This negotiation and retendering of contracts is part of the Council's strategy for cost reduction and will continue over the medium-term.

### **Fees and Charges**

- 5.13 Fees and Charges are based on the Council's agreed principles of increasing existing fees and charges on a market forces basis whilst having regard to the Council's policies and objectives. The usual approach of the Council is for fees and charges to be increased by price inflation as a minimum. However, given the current level of inflation, this approach was not applied for the review of 2023/24 fees and charges, and a minimum of a 5% increase was provided as a guide. The Council continues to review opportunities to introduce new fees as appropriate. Proposed fees and charges for next year were approved by Cabinet on 3 January 2023.



## Interest Payable and Receivable

- 5.14 **Interest Payable** - The budget for debt interest over the current MTFS period totals £1.587m. This has not been revised in this update of the MTFS. The existing loans are all fixed rate loans and therefore not susceptible to market increases. Where the capital programme requires future additional borrowing, the budget will be updated as and when projects are completed, and actual borrowing is known.
- 5.15 **Interest Receivable** – In the Bank of England’s November Monetary Policy Report, it forecasts the bank rate to peak at 5.2% at Quarter 4 in 2023 and then to fall to 4.7% a year later. In light of these forecasts, the total budget for investment income over the MTFS period has been increased by £4.2m to £7.4m. This is based on the current investment portfolio of short and long-term investments.

## Establishment Costs

- 5.16 Establishment costs are the single largest revenue cost for the Council and represents approximately 50% of its total direct expenditure.
- 5.17 **Public Sector Pay** –The 2022/23 pay offer by the National Employers is a £1,925 increase on all pay points 1 and above. The cost to the General Fund of the pay award is £1.4m to the General Fund. The pay award assumption for 2023/24 and 2024/25 has also been increased from 2% to 4% and 3% respectively. A 1% pay award represents an increase of approximately £0.330m to the General Fund.
- 5.18 **National Insurance Contribution Increase** – Also referred to as the Health and Social Care Levy, the Government increased the Employer National Insurance Contribution by 1.25% from April 2022. However, in the Chancellor’s Mini-Budget announcement, the Government reversed this increase from 6 November 2022. The reduction in employer NICs will produce savings against the General Fund budget in the current year of £0.110m and over £0.300m in subsequent years. Local government received funding of around £400m for the employer NICs increase through the 2022/23 local government finance settlement, although the actual amounts for local government, either collectively or individually, were never explicitly confirmed. As per Section 4.10 the Services Grant for 2023/24 has been reduced to reflect this change in Government Policy.
- 5.19 **Actuarial Valuation** - The latest triennial actuarial valuation of the assets and liabilities of the Suffolk County Pension Fund was completed on 31 March 2022. The Fund’s Actuary have reported the actuarial funding position for the Pension Fund of 107%, an increase of 8% since the last valuation exercise in 2019. This is the first time that the Fund has reached 100% funding.
- 5.20 The Pension Fund specifically relating to East Suffolk Council is 110% funded, an increase from 99% at the time of the last review on 31 March 2019. The triennial review also sets the employer contribution rates for the next three years – 2023/24 to 2025/26. The Council currently pays an employer contribution rate of 32% and the lowest rate allowed by the Actuary for the next three years is 19%. The Council is proposing a reduction of 7% to 25%. This would provide 88% probability of success that over 20 years the Pension Fund will remain or achieve 100% funded. This level of reduction results in a significant annual saving to the General Fund of £1.4m and has been built into the MTFS.

## **Other Pressures**

- 5.21 In formulating its detailed spending plans, the Council has also taken account of past performance and the previous year's outturn position.
- 5.22 Ranging from increased demand for services or changes in national policy, the Council's MTFs has been adjusted to reflect the financial implications of these changes. The budget monitoring work by the Finance Team working with service areas has identified the Council's budget requirements.
- 5.23 Due to recruitment difficulties in some areas, the Council has been required to cover vacancies with temporary cover, particularly in areas of specialism. Additional resourcing needs have been in response to service demand, national policies and legislation. For example, Homelessness and Environmental Services, and delivering on strategic priorities such as Waste Management.
- 5.24 Work continues within the Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority area to establish post Brexit requirements and a sustainable operational model for Port Health going forward, which remains a significant area of uncertainty, with financial implications for the service. Due to the strike days at the Port of Felixstowe, Port Health has lost income estimated at over £0.200m so far this year. In the current year, this can be covered from the Port Health Reserve.

## **Operations Partnership (Norse)**

- 5.25 The current MTFs does not take into consideration any financial implications associated with the contract with Norse coming to an end in July 2023, and therefore the efficiencies expected to be delivered with East Suffolk Services Ltd. The budget estimates for 2024/25 and beyond are currently based on the existing arrangements, together with the additional external cost pressures on the Operations service – primarily rising fuel costs and national and local pay settlements. These are challenges that the Council and Norse would have to address, regardless of the set-up of East Suffolk Services Ltd from July 2023.

## **Green Agenda - Caring For Our Environment**

- 5.26 The Council has pledged to be Carbon Neutral by 2030 and the Council's Strategic Plan includes the theme of 'Caring For Our Environment'. To delivery on these ambitions and priorities of the Council, inevitable requires investment without necessarily generating savings or additional income. The use of technology for homeworking and remote Committee meetings over the last two years, has reduced the need for staff and Members to travel and resulted in an annual saving of £0.200m compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- 5.27 **Appendix A6** includes details of budgets and reserves specifically provided to assist with the delivery of the Council's Green Agenda.

## **6 RESERVES AND BALANCES**

- 6.1 In order to manage its financial affairs soundly, the Council needs to hold an appropriate level of reserves and balances. These allow it to:
- a) manage its cash flows economically and avoid temporary borrowing pending receipt of income due during the year;
  - b) deal promptly and efficiently with emergencies if they occur;
  - c) take previously unseen opportunities to secure benefits that may arise during the year;

- d) mitigate reliance on volatile sources of funding;
- e) set money aside for known events but where the timing or precise amount required is not yet certain; and
- f) accumulate monies to meet costs that it would be unreasonable for taxpayers to meet in a single year.

6.2 In addition to the General Fund Balance, the Council keeps a number of earmarked reserves on the Balance Sheet. Some are required for statutory reasons, some are needed to comply with proper accounting practice, and others have been set up voluntarily to earmark resources for future spending plans or potential liabilities.

6.3 The Council has continued to develop its prudent financial management arrangements, through the development of earmarked reserves to mitigate potential future risks. As issues arise, the potential requirement for an earmarked reserve is considered. New earmarked reserves are formally considered as part of the detailed budget process, to ensure that risks identified are adequately mitigated, and throughout the annual budget monitoring process as risks arise or become clearer.

### **General Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves**

6.4 The detailed budget process includes an assessment of risk, the adequacy of General Fund Reserves and a review of earmarked reserves. This review evaluates the need to create and/or change earmarked reserve levels and to also release reserves which are no longer required, thereby becoming a one-off resource for the Council. A risk assessment of the General Fund Balances informs the Chief Finance Officer's view of the adequacy of reserves to provide assurance to the budget. Having regard to the financial risks surrounding the budget planning process; the Council maintains the level of General Fund balances at around 3%-5% of its budgeted gross expenditure (in the region of £130 million for East Suffolk). This would equate to maintaining a General Fund balance for East Suffolk, in the region of between £4m and £6m. As of 1 April 2022, the opening General Fund balance of East Suffolk stood at £6m.

6.5 Further use of the General Fund balance will be evaluated against an assessment of risk, to ensure financial sustainability for the Council is maintained, whilst supporting the strategy direction and ambitions of the Council. The MTFS does not include any use of the General Fund balance.

6.6 One of the key underpinning financial principles of the MTFS is to not use the Council's Reserves (and other one-off resources) as a primary method to balance the ongoing pressures in the budget. Earmarked reserves are used for specific one-off purposes to support the delivery of corporate objectives and to mitigate risks.

6.7 The opening balances for 2022/23 are still subject to conclusion of the external audit review for 2021/22.

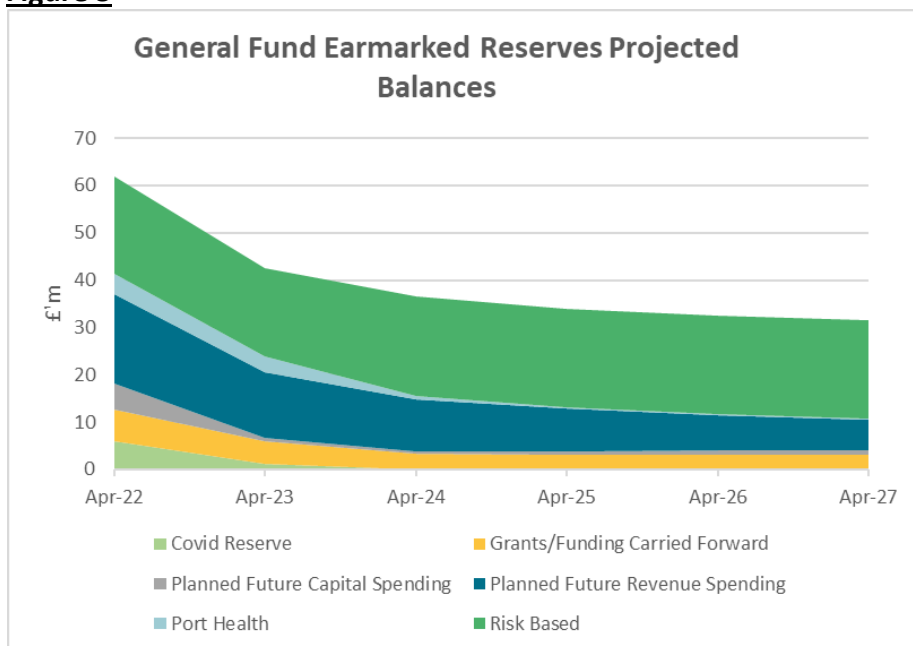
6.8 The total balance of General Fund Earmarked Reserves was £62m as of 1 April 2022. Earmarked Reserves are categorised into the following groups;

- **Grants/Funding Carried Forward** – this is external funding the Council has received for specific purposes and is drawn down from reserves when spend is incurred.
- **Planned Future Revenue Spending** – Council funding has been set aside for specific service areas and/or projects.

- **Planned Future Capital Spending** – this is revenue funding set aside to provide funding for the capital programme.
- **Risk Based** – Council funding has been set aside for unforeseen budget pressures and fluctuations in budget areas of volatility. The Business Rate Equalisation Reserve is the main reserve within this group. This reserve is primarily held to manage fluctuations in Business Rates income, due to the timing of accounting treatments. The reserve will also be called upon to address budget gap pressures. The balance on this reserve as of April 2022 was £15.2m. Another reserve in this category is the In-Year Savings reserve, which is primarily used to address budget gaps. The balance on this reserve at the start of the year was £3.5m. It is proposed to use £1.098m of this reserve to balance the current year budget. From March 2024 the balance remaining on this reserve is forecast to be £2.2m.
- **Covid Reserve** – Mainly consisting of Section 31 Grants to fund Covid related Business Rate Reliefs and the Local Authority support grant. This reserve is forecast to be used by the end of this financial year, with the exception of approximately £0.600m of Section 31 Grant to fund the 2020/21 Collection Fund Deficit treatment, as detailed in Section 4.16 of the report. The reserve also holds a balance of £1m from the Covid Support funding. There has been some use of this in the current year, to cover costs associated with Covid, such as backfilling, and post assurance and reconciliation work on the various Covid grant schemes. The MTFS includes release of this £1m balance into the General Fund in the current year, as it is considered to be no longer required for its original purpose beyond March 2023.
- **Port Health** – The Port Health reserve balance as at 1 April 2022 was £4.3m. This reserve is expected to be fully utilised over the MTFS period, to meet operation needs and as external funding held in reserve is allocated towards relevant spent. This reserve will be closely monitored over the MTFS period, due to continuing uncertainty surrounding the post Brexit situation.

6.9 A review of reserves has been undertaken this year, to identify reserve balances which have not been used for some time and/or are no longer required for their original purpose. This exercise has identified £1.8m of reserve balances, included the £1m of Covid support funding mentioned previously. The MTFS includes the proposal for this balance to be released into the General Fund in the current year.

6.10 **Figure 5** below shows the current projections for the General Fund Earmarked Reserves over the MTFS, categorised as above. This shows a decline in reserve balances from £62m at 1 April 2022 to £31.6m by April 2027. In addition to the Covid reserve which will be fully used, there are a number of other reserves that are forecast to be fully or substantially utilised over this period, and not replenished. This includes the NHB reserve, Transformation reserve, Capital reserve and Port Health reserve.

**Figure 5**

- 6.11 The presented reserves position does include £1.098m use of the In-Year Savings reserve to achieve a balanced budget for 2022/23. A summary of Reserve balances is provided below and is supported in more detail by **Appendix A7**.

Reserves	Actual April 2022 £'000	MTFS April 2023 £'000	MTFS April 2024 £'000	MTFS April 2025 £'000	MTFS April 2026 £'000	MTFS April 2027 £'000
<b>Unallocated Financial Reserves</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>
<b>Earmarked Reserves:</b>						
Grants/Funding carried Forward	6,861	4,653	3,243	3,185	3,189	3,192
Planned Future Capital Spending	5,285	791	457	549	741	933
Planned Future Revenue Spending	18,949	13,847	10,963	9,211	7,582	6,394
Risk Based	20,590	18,663	20,896	20,882	20,902	20,912
COVID Reserve	5,882	1,186	32	0	0	0
Port Health	4,315	3,286	858	146	160	158
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>61,882</b>	<b>42,426</b>	<b>36,449</b>	<b>33,973</b>	<b>32,574</b>	<b>31,589</b>

- 6.12 The Planned Revenue Spending group of reserves contains key reserves to highlight which are used to fund projects and initiatives to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan. These are set out in the table below and currently show balances declining with no further contributions to increase available funds over the current MTFS.

Reserves	Actual April 2022 £'000	MTFS April 2023 £'000	MTFS April 2024 £'000	MTFS April 2025 £'000	MTFS April 2026 £'000	MTFS April 2027 £'000
Business Rates Pilot	1,385	782	699	699	661	624
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	5,580	4,857	3,827	2,457	1,205	152
Transformation - Digital	296	316	336	332	291	250
Transformation - Environmental	500	296	296	296	296	296
Transformation - Financial Sustainability	2,769	1,589	705	705	705	705

## **7 CAPITAL STRATEGY**

7.1 The Capital Strategy gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services in East Suffolk, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The Capital Strategy for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27 was considered by the Audit & Governance Committee at its meeting in December 2022 and by Full Council in January 2023. Capital planning is about financial investment on the purchase of new assets, the creation of new assets and enhancing and/or extending the useful life of existing assets. The Council aims to achieve the optimum balance between the future needs of East Suffolk, including the need to drive growth, whilst ensuring affordability in the short and long term. Key principles include:

- Developing asset and capital strategies that facilitate a long-term approach to decision-making.
- Ensuring that assets are only held as needed to achieve Council objectives.
- Maximising efficiency in the management and use of assets.
- Ensuring that pressure to achieve short-term savings does not compromise the value of assets through lack of investment.
- Ensuring that capital investment is targeted where it will achieve the greatest long-term benefit.

7.2 Enhancing the management of the Council's existing asset base and looking beyond the traditional medium-term financial planning horizon is a major priority. The current Asset Management Strategy was approved in July 2019, broken down into four key components:

- Administrative Improvements
- Compliance and Sustainability
- A strategic approach to assets
- Reducing expenditure and increasing income

7.3 For the purposes of setting the budget for 2023/24 and medium-term financial planning, the Capital Programme has been updated to reflect existing projects and the latest capital investment plans for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27.

### **Capital Programme**

7.4 The Capital Programme including both General Fund and HRA elements is subject to the scrutiny process and formally adopted by Full Council each year. The decision to accept individual projects onto the Programme is driven by the overriding requirement to support the priorities communicated in the East Suffolk Strategic Plan, providing they are affordable.

7.5 As well as adequately maintaining the asset base, a range of other important factors are considered when deciding upon the allocation of General Fund resources. Consideration is given to:

- Legislation – the need for capital investment due to changes in legislation, including those with health and safety implications.
- Resource Availability – the sustainability of the Capital Programme is a primary consideration and integral to the MTFS.

- 7.6 Where required, capital projects are supported by a detailed business case, which demonstrates a set of clear objectives and measurable benefits, as well as detailed financial implications. This includes the on-going revenue implications of a capital project, to ensure these are built into the MTFS revenue assumptions.
- 7.7 Major capital projects are delivered by dedicated project managers within the Council, with leadership and oversight provided by the Senior Management Team.
- 7.8 Due to the economic climate and significant changes to major schemes in the current Capital programme for 2022/23 to 2025/26, a mid-year revised General Fund Programme was presented to Cabinet and approved by Full Council in September 2022.
- 7.9 An updated Programme for the MTFS period was presented to Cabinet on 3 January 2023. A further update of the report was considered by Cabinet on 7 February for recommending to Full Council for 22 February 2023.

## EAST SUFFOLK MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - KEY PRINCIPLES

## 1 PRIORITIES, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The **East Suffolk Strategic Plan** provides the overarching vision for East Suffolk. In fulfilment of the Plan, the Council makes use of significant resources to achieve its aims including money, people, property, and technology. In order to allocate resources to competing demands, achieve effective and efficient use of its resources, best value and ultimately achieve its vision, the Council has several strategies and plans which give a clear sense of direction and underpin the deployment of those resources. The Long Term and **Medium Term Financial Strategies** sit under the **Strategic Plan**, and combined with other strategies and plans, they support and embrace the strategic direction of East Suffolk.

## 2 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Council's MTFS aims to ensure the provision of the best quality services possible within the resources available. To do so it must maximise the use of its resources to ensure they are used efficiently and effectively to support the development of longer term sustainable objectives.
- 2.2 The specific objectives of the MTFS are to:
- a) ensure that the Council sets a balanced, sustainable budget year by year, so that forecast spending does not exceed forecast resources available to it;
  - b) plan for a level of Council Tax that the Council, its residents and Government see as necessary, acceptable and affordable to ensure that it has the financial capacity to deliver the Council's policies and objectives;
  - c) redirect resources over time to adequately support and resource the priorities of the both the Council and the wider community; and
  - d) maintain sufficient reserves and balances to ensure that the Council's long-term financial health remains sound.

## 3 STRATEGY PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The principles set out below provide a framework within which the Council will develop its detailed financial plan over the medium term.

**General**

There are a number of overarching principles that will apply across the Council's detailed financial accounting, planning and monitoring:

- a) that the Council's budgets, financial records and accounts will be prepared and maintained in line with approved Accounting Standards, the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Government Accounting, the CIPFA Prudential Code and the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution and Finance Procedure Rules;
- b) prior to setting a budget, the Council will always analyse potential risks and ensure these are minimised in line with its Risk Management Strategy;



- c) that the Council's Corporate Management Team will review the budget proposals for reasonableness and adherence to corporate policies and objectives prior to the budget being submitted to Cabinet;
- d) the Council will monitor its revenue and capital budgets effectively. Monitoring will be undertaken quarterly by Heads of Service together with their portfolio holders, and integrated quarterly monitoring reports will be reported to Cabinet. In cases where significant financial and service performance deviates from that planned, action plans setting out corrective action will be drawn up by Heads of Service / Portfolio Holders and reported to Cabinet as appropriate;
- e) that the Council's Corporate Management Team will take appropriate steps to continue to maintain and improve the accuracy and quality of data that it uses throughout the Council thereby ensuring that budget and other decisions are taken on a sound basis; and
- f) the Council will seek to maximise external contributions towards revenue and capital spending for example through bidding for specific grants, attracting levered funding, participating in new funding streams and engaging in further strategic partnering opportunities where appropriate.

### **General Fund (Revenue)**

#### **3.2 In relation to its revenue budgets the Council will:**

- a) set a balanced budget each year that will be constructed to reflect its objectives, priorities and commitments. In particular, the budget will influence and be influenced by the Strategic Plan, the Organisational and Development Strategy, Capital and Asset Management Strategies, the Risk Management Strategy, its Comprehensive Equality Scheme and its Consultation and Engagement Strategies;
- b) within the constraints of the resources available to it, set a sustainable budget each year that meets on-going commitments from on-going resources. The Council will continue to aim to maintain its level of general balances when it sets its revenue budget each year now that a prudent level of balances has been achieved;
- c) seek to identify annual efficiency savings through business process improvement, shared service initiatives, service best value reviews and benchmarking and strategic partnering opportunities within and across county borders;
- d) review the appropriateness of service delivery between the Council, parishes and other partners;
- e) increase existing fees and charges on a market forces basis whilst having regard to the Council's policies and objectives. As a minimum fees and charges should be increased by price inflation. The Council will also review opportunities to introduce new fees as appropriate; and
- f) within Government guidelines, set a level of Council Tax that the Council, its residents and Government see as necessary, acceptable and affordable to deliver the Council's policies and objectives.

## Capital

- 3.3 When considering capital investment, the Council will:
- a) maximise the generation of capital receipts and grants to support its planned investment programmes
  - b) enhance its capital investment by applying specific grants and contributions, capital receipts, earmarked reserves and revenue contributions, with any balance being met by external borrowing
  - c) not recognise capital receipts until there is certainty that the receipt will materialise, and these will not be earmarked against specific developments without express Cabinet approval
  - d) allocate its capital resources in line with its Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan whilst recognising that other priorities may emerge that may require those plans to be amended and resources to be diverted
  - e) annually review and prioritise capital schemes in accordance with Council objectives having regard to:
    - i) the business case for any given project; asset management planning
    - ii) affordability in line with the application of the Prudential Code.

## Balances and Reserves

- 3.4 In relation to its balances and earmarked reserves, the Council will:
- each year maintain the level of General Fund balances at around 3% - 5% of its budgeted gross expenditure. This would lead the Council to maintain a General Fund balance in a range of around £4m to £6m.
  - have regard to the financial risks surrounding the budget planning process, including those associated with the structural deficit, inflationary pressures, interest rates, partnerships, the treatment of savings, new burdens and demand led expenditure.
  - review its earmarked reserves, which have been established to meet known or predicted liabilities, to ensure that the level of those reserves are still appropriate; and
  - return reserve balances no longer required to the General Fund as appropriate.

## Treasury Management and Investment

- 3.5 The Council will:
- a) having regard to risk, maximise investment income and minimise borrowing costs within the overall framework set out in the Council's annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy; and
  - b) secure the stability of the Council's longer-term financial position rather than seeking to make short-term one-off gains which may lead to higher costs in the long term.

- c) having regard to risk, seek to diversify its investment portfolio; maximise investment income; and deliver economic development objectives through the Asset Investment Strategy (in development).

## 4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Council's spending will have regard to:

- a) the base budget position for the current financial year, adjusted for in year grant changes;
- b) the Council's medium term priorities;
- c) the refocusing of service expenditure through transactional, shared services and other efficiencies to support the achievement of its medium term priorities and satisfy Government funding changes;
- d) demographic and welfare changes;
- e) the impact of the current pandemic;
- f) consultation outcomes;
- g) fiscal matters including:
  - price inflation.
  - the effect on the level of General Fund balances and reserves.
  - the impact of any changes to the capital programme on the potential costs of borrowing.
  - triennial revaluation of the pension fund.
  - ongoing commitments, arising in part, from initiatives that have previously been funded from specific grants.
  - achieving budgeted savings from outsourcing, shared services and service reviews.
  - the likely passporting of some Government departmental savings targets to councils.

RISKS	PROBABILITY HIGH (H) MEDIUM (M) LOW (L)	IMPACT HIGH (H) MEDIUM (M) LOW (L)	MITIGATING ACTIONS
<p><b>Strategic Risks</b></p> <p>The absence of a robust Medium Term Financial Strategy could adversely affect the Council's budget and resource planning and projections.</p> <p>Failure to understand changing community needs and customer expectations can result in the Council providing levels of service which are not appropriately aligned to the needs of communities and customers.</p> <p>Local Government funding is under continuous pressure and review. Failure to respond to these funding pressures may adversely impact on the Council's ability to service delivery.</p> <p>Budget pressures arising from housing, economic, social and other demographic changes.</p> <p><b>Financial</b></p> <p>Uncertain medium term sustainability of incentivised income areas subject to Government policy, economic factors, and revaluation e.g. Brexit, business rates and New Homes Bonus.</p>	<p><b>L</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p>	<p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p>	<p>Continually monitor and refine the strategy in line with changing influences. Update Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.</p> <p>Continuously engage with key stakeholders and take advantage of existing consultation methodologies. Continue to monitor and more closely align service levels to demand and need.</p> <p>Take advantage of the Council's growth opportunities to reduce dependency on government funding. Align service delivery to funding levels, improve exist strategy to minimise risk.</p> <p>Take advantage of technological advancements to understand and reduce unit costs, monitor demand for services and proactively manage resourcing requirements, invest in schemes to promote skills and developments.</p> <p>Constantly monitor information and update risk appraisals and financial projections. Provide timely briefings and updates to Members/ key stakeholders to facilitate decision making. Adopt prudent budgeting approach not placing undue reliance on uncertain funding sources.</p>

RISKS	PROBABILITY HIGH (H) MEDIUM (M) LOW (L)	IMPACT HIGH (H) MEDIUM (M) LOW (L)	MITIGATING ACTIONS
Uncertainty surrounding the Government's change agenda including, business rates and welfare reform over the medium term.	H	H	Constantly monitor information from Government and update risk appraisals and financial projections. Provide timely briefings and updates to Members/ key stakeholders to facilitate decision making. Lobby through the LGA as appropriate.
Budget pressures from demand led services and income variances reflecting the wider economy.	H	H	Monitor pressures throughout the budget process and take timely actions.
Costs arising from the triennial review of the Local Government Pension Scheme.	L	L	Review and monitor information from Government and actuaries. Update forecasts as necessary.
Interest rate exposure on investments and borrowing.	H	M	Review cash flows, ensuring the Council has a flexible and forward looking Treasury management policy.
<b>Information</b>			
The Council itself has no influence over the outcome of some of the other bigger assumptions such as formula grant, national pay awards, interest rates, inflation and statutory fees and charges.	H	H	Key assumptions made are regularly reviewed from a variety of sources. Forecasts are updated as necessary.
<b>Operational</b>			
The Council has entered into strategic partnerships and contracts and is therefore susceptible to economic, social and demographic changes	L	M	Effective negotiation, sound governance arrangements and reviews of partnerships performance.
There is a potential risk to the Council if there is a financial failure of an external organisation, providing services to the public on behalf of the Council.	L	M	Ensure rigorous financial evaluations are carried out at tender stage. Consideration of processes to ensure annual review of the successful organisation and review any external auditor comments.

RISKS	PROBABILITY HIGH (H) MEDIUM (M) LOW (L)	IMPACT HIGH (H) MEDIUM (M) LOW (L)	MITIGATING ACTIONS
<p><b>People</b></p> <p>Loss of key skills, resources and expertise.</p>	<b>H</b>	<b>M</b>	Continue to invest in staff developments, service continuity measures. Monitor succession planning. Keep staff consulted and informed. Ensure employment terms and conditions are competitive and development needs identified through 'My Conversation' programme with staff are satisfied.
<p><b>Regulatory</b></p> <p>Changes of responsibility from Government can adversely impact on service priorities and objectives.</p>	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>	Sound system of service and financial planning in place. Lobby as appropriate.
<p><b>Reputation</b></p> <p>Loss of reputation if unforeseen resource constraints result in unplanned service reductions.</p>	<b>L</b>	<b>H</b>	Identify and implement robust solutions in response to changes. Consult widely. Seek to achieve a prudent level of balances and reserves.

## Band D Equivalent Taxbase by Parish

PARISH	2022/23	2023/24	Difference
Aldeburgh	1,880.77	1,899.17	18.40
Alderton	181.34	181.06	-0.28
Aldringham-Cum-Thorpe	595.58	606.00	10.42
All Saints & St. Nicholas, St. Michael and St. Peter S E	101.13	98.83	-2.30
Badingham	227.98	235.76	7.78
Barnby	217.87	214.86	-3.01
Barsham and Shipmeadow	134.17	134.31	0.14
Bawdsey	196.37	198.00	1.63
Beccles	3,241.87	3,346.33	104.46
Benacre	32.36	32.02	-0.34
Benhall & Sternfield	306.75	311.61	4.86
Blaxhall	110.29	112.93	2.64
Blundeston and Flixton	466.25	479.77	13.52
Blyford and Sotherton	71.37	71.90	0.53
Blythburgh	193.81	198.44	4.63
Boulge	14.14	14.48	0.34
Boyton	60.45	62.44	1.99
Bramfield & Thorington	192.76	197.96	5.20
Brampton with Stoven	150.65	157.53	6.88
Brandeston	142.24	146.98	4.74
Bredfield	147.53	151.22	3.69
Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis Farm	998.25	998.79	0.54
Bromeswell	154.41	153.62	-0.79
Bruisyard	70.92	71.81	0.89
Bucklesham	203.25	205.35	2.10
Bungay	1,643.44	1,668.62	25.18
Burgh	78.81	78.95	0.14
Butley, Capel St Andrew & Wantisden	114.77	118.69	3.92
Campsea Ashe	156.10	155.80	-0.30
Carlton Colville	2,664.87	2,671.88	7.01
Charsfield	148.83	162.02	13.19
Chediston, Linstead Magna & Linstead Parva	156.02	157.72	1.70
Chillesford	70.86	75.96	5.10
Clopton	138.64	142.46	3.82
Cookley & Walpole	152.70	153.25	0.55
Corton	582.91	588.59	5.68
Covehithe	12.93	13.92	0.99
Cransford	67.01	67.77	0.76
Cratfield	149.71	152.30	2.59
Cretingham, Hoo & Monewden	209.59	208.88	-0.71

**Band D Equivalent Taxbase by Parish**

<b>PARISH</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Dallinghoo	82.79	82.88	0.09
Darsham	200.99	228.14	27.15
Debach	32.89	33.38	0.49
Dennington	235.11	239.53	4.42
Dunwich	86.56	85.66	-0.90
Earl Soham	202.53	202.51	-0.02
Easton	177.12	178.23	1.11
Eyke	152.94	151.75	-1.19
Felixstowe	8,645.91	8,771.40	125.49
Flixton, St. Cross S E & St. Margaret South Elmham	165.75	167.77	2.02
Framlingham	1,618.57	1,644.19	25.62
Friston	210.80	208.50	-2.30
Frostenden, Uggeshall and South Cove	170.56	172.91	2.35
Gisleham	248.63	248.94	0.31
Great Bealings	132.98	133.06	0.08
Great Glemham	100.06	102.19	2.13
Grundisburgh & Culpho	645.74	655.32	9.58
Hacheston	166.03	165.66	-0.37
Halesworth	1,752.20	1,808.83	56.63
Hasketon	183.82	186.36	2.54
Hemley	25.57	26.41	0.84
Henstead with Hulver Street	136.95	138.11	1.16
Heveningham	63.23	61.42	-1.81
Hollesley	494.63	507.88	13.25
Holton	310.84	311.80	0.96
Homersfield	58.64	59.58	0.94
Huntingfield	75.36	79.71	4.35
Iken	62.83	61.93	-0.90
Kelsale-cum-Carlton	404.66	413.65	8.99
Kesgrave	4,809.30	4,826.19	16.89
Kessingland	1,441.05	1,439.26	-1.79
Kettleburgh	106.24	108.33	2.09
Kirton & Falkenham	555.62	557.47	1.85
Knodishall	313.92	311.92	-2.00
Leiston	1,820.58	1,957.72	137.14
Letheringham	41.42	42.41	0.99
Levington & Stratton Hall	123.38	125.14	1.76
Little Bealings	213.78	216.46	2.68
Little Glemham	67.15	66.78	-0.37
Lound	116.56	127.74	11.18
Lowestoft	12,733.88	12,926.07	192.19
Marlesford	89.65	90.73	1.08
Martlesham	2,296.65	2,142.72	-153.93
Melton	1,905.05	1,945.62	40.57



**Band D Equivalent Taxbase by Parish**

<b>PARISH</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Mettingham	83.26	83.98	0.72
Middleton	206.24	209.69	3.45
Mutford	186.52	186.40	-0.12
Nacton	343.95	341.61	-2.34
Newbourne	110.64	112.65	2.01
North Cove	151.14	149.77	-1.37
Orford & Gedgrave	396.15	401.90	5.75
Otley	310.55	327.59	17.04
Oulton	1,549.90	1,654.14	104.24
Oulton Broad	3,270.87	3,307.43	36.56
Parham	120.59	131.13	10.54
Peasenhall	240.52	245.78	5.26
Pettistree	88.60	87.12	-1.48
Playford	111.33	110.97	-0.36
Ramsholt	12.22	12.22	0.00
Redisham	53.35	61.82	8.47
Rendham	127.96	127.13	-0.83
Rendlesham	931.19	941.76	10.57
Reydon	1,194.23	1,196.49	2.26
Ringsfield and Weston	220.36	221.74	1.38
Rumburgh	118.80	120.07	1.27
Rushmere	32.68	34.13	1.45
Rushmere St Andrew	2,579.54	2,607.03	27.49
Saxmundham	1,586.60	1,609.94	23.34
Saxtead	127.13	126.45	-0.68
Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough	185.49	182.31	-3.18
Shottisham	84.00	83.44	-0.56
Sibton	97.02	96.50	-0.52
Snapes	328.19	332.72	4.53
Somerleyton, Ashby & Herringfleet	166.95	163.68	-3.27
Southwold	1,082.31	1,100.22	17.91
Spexhall	86.15	85.54	-0.61
St. Andrew Ilketshall	114.71	116.03	1.32
St. James South Elmham	87.25	91.17	3.92
St. John Ilketshall	20.25	20.25	0.00
St. Lawrence Ilketshall	60.24	61.83	1.59
St. Margaret Ilketshall	71.55	70.34	-1.21
Stratford St Andrew and Farnham	139.87	140.49	0.62
Sudbourne	186.67	186.37	-0.30
Sutton	147.22	150.97	3.75
Sutton Heath	367.03	374.89	7.86
Sweffling	95.45	98.89	3.44
Swilland & Witnesham	421.28	427.46	6.18

**Band D Equivalent Taxbase by Parish**

<b>PARISH</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Theberton	150.49	150.78	0.29
Trimley St Martin	744.63	767.41	22.78
Trimley St Mary	1,272.73	1,268.02	-4.71
Tuddenham St Martin	162.29	159.80	-2.49
Tunstall	259.85	256.12	-3.73
Ubbeston	43.39	45.10	1.71
Ufford	403.37	406.54	3.17
Walberswick	372.62	375.63	3.01
Waldringfield	256.72	255.28	-1.44
Wangford with Henham	257.31	258.05	0.74
Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet	419.07	421.36	2.29
Westerfield	236.87	248.51	11.64
Westhall	131.28	136.42	5.14
Westleton	309.76	308.17	-1.59
Wickham Market	825.34	829.10	3.76
Wissett	124.25	127.62	3.37
Woodbridge	3,226.36	3,389.95	163.59
Worlingham	1,286.19	1,298.40	12.21
Wrentham	377.07	379.37	2.30
Yoxford	349.27	357.01	7.74
<b>East Suffolk Council - Total</b>	<b>89,023.43</b>	<b>90,340.92</b>	<b>1,317.49</b>

## NHB RESERVE SUMMARY 2022/23 TO 2026/27

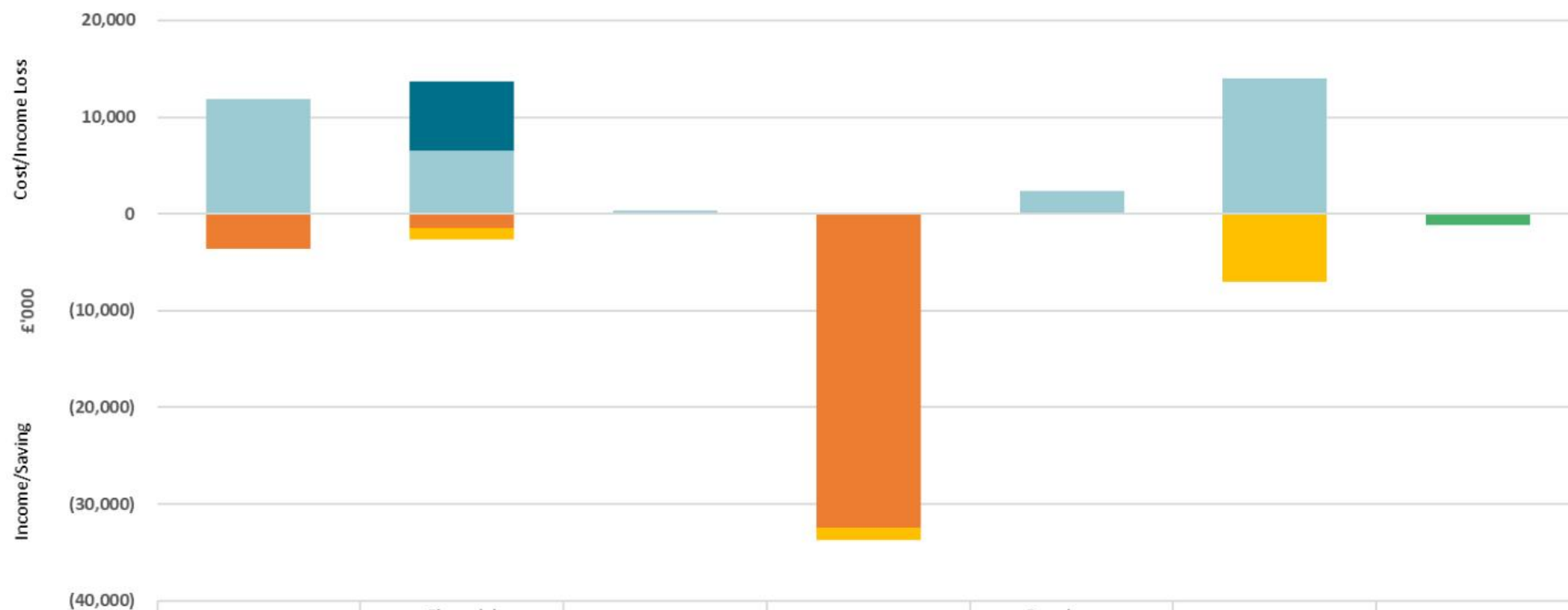
NHB Reserve					
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Revised Budget	Revised Budget	Revised Budget	Revised Budget	Revised Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
NHB Reserve Balance Brought Forward	(5,580)	(4,857)	(3,827)	(2,457)	(1,205)
NHB In-Year Funding	(1,649)	(447)	0	0	0
<b>Total NHB Funding in Reserve</b>	<b>(7,229)</b>	<b>(5,304)</b>	<b>(3,827)</b>	<b>(2,457)</b>	<b>(1,205)</b>
<b>Application of NHB</b>					
<b><u>Enabling Communities Budget</u></b>					
55 Councillors * £7.5k	432	412	412	412	412
Ease the Squeeze	52	0	0	0	0
	<b>484</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>412</b>
<b><u>Community Partnerships</u></b>					
8 Partnership * £25k each	224	200	200	200	200
<b><u>Resourcing &amp; Engagement</u></b>					
CP Manager	72	72	74	76	77
Communities Officer	0	21	21	21	21
Funding Officer	18	21	21	21	21
Venues for meetings	3	2	2	2	2
Contribution to Suffolk Association Local Councils	10	10	10	10	10
Contribution to Community Action Suffolk	10	10	10	10	10
	<b>337</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>341</b>
<b><u>Strategic Community Partnerships</u></b>					
	555	300	300	300	300
	<b>555</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>
<b><u>WIFI Implementation on Market Towns</u></b>					
	82	61	37	0	0
<b><u>Economic Development Towns Fund</u></b>					
	22	0	0	0	0
<b><u>Lowestoft Full Fibre project</u></b>					
	575	0	0	0	0
<b><u>UCI World Masters Cycle Cross Championships</u></b>					
	9	0	0	0	0
<b><u>City of Culture</u></b>					
	25	72	0	0	0
<b><u>First Light Festival</u></b>					
	0	180	170	150	0
<b><u>Safeguarding Officer</u></b>					
	7	13	9	0	0
<b><u>Empty Homes Officer</u></b>					
	35	83	84	50	0
<b><u>Place Based initiatives</u></b>					
Lowestoft Rising	20	20	20	0	0
<b>Total NHB Earmarked for Community Initiatives</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,252</b>	<b>1,053</b>
<b>Set Aside to Support the Budget</b>					
To Support Transition of NHB use to East Suffolk	221	0	0	0	0
<b>Total NHB use for the Year</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,252</b>	<b>1,053</b>
<b>NHB Reserve Balance Carried Forward</b>					
	<b>(4,857)</b>	<b>(3,827)</b>	<b>(2,457)</b>	<b>(1,205)</b>	<b>(152)</b>

## KEY MTF5 CHANGES BY STRATEGIC THEME/OTHER FACTORS

MTFS Update	Category of Change	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	Total over MTFS period £'000	Strategic Theme/Other Factors	Comments
<b>Additional Cost</b>									
National Employers pending pay award for 2022/23 - Council direct staffing	Additional Cost	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	7,000	Resourcing Impact	Based on current offer by National Employers.
Future year pay award assumptions	Additional Cost	0	590	920	940	1,560	4,010	Resourcing Impact	Assumptions for pay awards from 2023/24 increased from 2% to 4% in 2023/24 and to 3% in 2024/25.
Agency/contractor costs	Additional Cost	635	100	100	100	100	1,035	Resourcing Impact	Cover for staffing vacancies, particularly in areas of specialism. Increase annual budget to prior years average.
Net establishment growth	Additional Cost	(1,309)	833	818	825	811	1,978	Resourcing Impact	Establishment growth net of vacancy allowance.
External audit fees	Additional Cost	0	95	95	95	95	380	Governance	Public bodies have been advised of a 150% increase on top of the 2022/23 fee.
Ringo costs	Additional Cost	75	72	70	70	70	357	Financial Sustainability	To reflect increased usage of Ringo across Council car parks.
ARP partnership contribution	Additional Cost	300	115	135	135	135	820	Economic Impact	Mainly driven by inflation pressures.
Port Health	Additional Cost	240	275	125	115	100	855	Financial Sustainability	Review of recharges to Port Health, in particular the recharge for accommodate use.
Minimum Revenue Provision (Capital Programme)	Additional Cost	(58)	0	300	820	1,350	2,412	Growing our Economy	Revised to reflect the updated capital programme.
Inflationary pressures - insurance premiums	Additional Cost	75	140	150	150	155	670	Economic Impact	Estimate for the impact of inflation on insurance premiums.
Inflationary pressures - utilities	Additional Cost	700	600	600	600	600	3,100	Economic Impact	Estimate for the impact of inflation on utility costs, particularly on Leisure Centres.
Planned preventative maintenance	Additional Cost	0	265	202	225	225	917	Financial Sustainability	Asset Management schedule of programmed preventative maintenance.
Operation services	Additional Cost	343	1,013	1,990	1,990	1,990	7,326	Economic Impact	Inflationary impacts - from fuel and pay pressures
Operation services	Additional Cost	652	652	0	0	0	1,304	Financial Sustainability	Refuse vehicle hire
Other	Additional Cost	552	(737)	564	1,442	1,311	3,132	Financial Sustainability	
		<b>3,605</b>	<b>5,413</b>	<b>7,469</b>	<b>8,907</b>	<b>9,902</b>	<b>35,296</b>		
<b>Additional Income</b>									
Green waste subscription income	Additional Income	0	0	(50)	(50)	(50)	(150)	Financial Sustainability	Additional income due to subscription fee increase.
Business Rates Pooling Benefit	Additional Income	(174)	(2,000)	(1,000)	0	0	(3,174)	Government Policy	Current year increased based on in-year monitoring.
Business Rates income	Additional Income	0	(6,165)	(5,907)	(5,643)	(5,643)	(23,358)	Government Policy	Delays to funding reform to 2025/26 at the earliest.
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit	Additional Income	0	(1,766)	0	0	0	(1,766)	Government Policy	Updated estimate of the year end deficit on the Collection Fund.
Council Tax income	Additional Income	0	(90)	(90)	(100)	(620)	(900)	Financial Sustainability	The growth in the tax base has been better than originally forecast.
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	Additional Income	0	(376)	0	0	0	(376)	Financial Sustainability	The growth in the tax base has been better than originally forecast.
Interest income	Additional Income	(779)	(906)	(630)	(635)	(635)	(3,585)	Economic Impact	Forecasting higher investment rates over the MTF5, and to peak in 2023/24.
Core Funding Streams	Additional Income	(60)	(1,114)	(986)	(983)	(986)	(4,129)	Government Policy	Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2023/24
		<b>(1,013)</b>	<b>(12,417)</b>	<b>(8,663)</b>	<b>(7,411)</b>	<b>(7,934)</b>	<b>(37,438)</b>		
<b>Reduced Income</b>									
Parking services	Reduced Income	500	500	500	500	500	2,500	Financial Sustainability	Recognising a reduction in baseline income for parking services. Further analysis to be done.
Waste recycling credits	Reduced Income	800	800	800	800	800	4,000	Financial Sustainability	Correction to baseline budget.
Operations	Reduced Income	0	675	0	0	0	675	Financial Sustainability	Existing budget for Partnership profit share, not assumed in transition year to ESSL
		<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,975</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>7,175</b>		
<b>Savings</b>									
Health & Social Care Levy	Savings	(110)	(300)	(310)	(315)	(320)	(1,355)	Government Policy	Reversal of the Employer National Insurance increase (1.25%) introduced from 1 April 2022. The reversal is to take effect from 6 November 2022.
Employer superannuation rate	Savings	0	(1,690)	(1,740)	(1,780)	(1,810)	(7,020)	Resourcing Impact	Triennial review of the pension fund. The employer contribution rate for the next three years from 2023/24 is to reduce from 32% to 25%.
Leisure contracts	Savings	(190)	(250)	(250)	(250)	(290)	(1,230)	Financial Sustainability	Recognition of further efficiencies and income generation.
		<b>(300)</b>	<b>(2,240)</b>	<b>(2,300)</b>	<b>(2,345)</b>	<b>(2,420)</b>	<b>(9,605)</b>		
<b>Use of Reserves</b>									
Reserve balances no longer required	Use of Reserves	(1,845)	0	0	0	0	(1,845)	Use of Reserves	This followed a review of historic balances with no defined purpose or use in recent years.
Transfers to reserves	Use of Reserves	(649)	(100)	(100)	100	100	(649)	Use of Reserves	Transfers identified as no longer required.
Surplus Business Rate income	Use of Reserves	0	2,461	0	0	0	2,461	Use of Reserves	Transferred to the Business Rates Equalisation reserve.
Use of reserves to balance the budget	Use of Reserves	(1,098)	0	0	0	0	(1,098)	Use of Reserves	Use of risk based reserves.
		<b>(3,592)</b>	<b>2,361</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>(1,131)</b>		
<b>Net Total of MTF5 Updates - February 2023</b>	<b>Net Total of MTF5 Updates</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4,908)</b>	<b>(2,294)</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>948</b>	<b>(5,703)</b>		

## KEY MTFS CHANGES BY STRATEGIC THEME/OTHER FACTORS

MTFS Changes by Strategic Theme (ST)/Other Factors  
2022/23 to 2026/27



	Economic Impact	Financial Sustainability	Governance	Government Policy	Growing our Economy	Resourcing Impact	Use of Reserves
■ Use of Reserves							(1,131)
■ Saving		(1,230)		(1,355)		(7,020)	
■ Reduced Income		7,175					
■ Additional Income	(3,585)	(1,426)		(32,427)			
■ Additional Cost	11,916	6,565	380		2,412	14,023	

## KEY MTFS CHANGES BY STRATEGIC THEME/OTHER FACTORS

Key Updates to MTFS between the Cabinet meeting on 3 January 2023, the Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2023 and Cabinet on 7 February 2023

MTFS Update	Category of Change	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	Comments
Business Rates Income	Additional Income	0	0	0	0	(150)	Updated review of annual increase assumption
Operations	Reduced Income	0	675	0	0	0	Further review of Operations Budgets during transition year to ESSL
Core Funding Streams	Additional Income	(60)	(1,126)	(1,010)	(1,013)	(1,010)	Update following Provision Finance Settlement
Use of reserves	Use of Reserves	0	0	0	200	200	Adjustment to Capital reserve use following updated Capital Programme
Operations	Additional Cost	(25)	21	0	0	0	Updated review of Norse budget
Other	Additional Cost	204	(852)	(21)	763	895	Other changes processed across all areas
Change in use of reserve to balance budget	Use of Reserves	(119)	1,282	0	0	0	Adjustment for the changes above
<b>Total of Changes</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,031)</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>(65)</b>	

Key Updates to MTFS between Cabinet on 7 February 2023 and Full Council on 22 February 2023

MTFS Update	Category of Change	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	Comments
Business Rates Income	Additional Income	0	(3,707)	(1,007)	(1,743)	(1,293)	Following the completion of the NNDR1 return on 31 January 2023
Other	Additional Cost	193	(101)	(111)	(139)	(139)	Other minor changes processed
Use of reserves	Use of Reserves	0	2,461	0	0	0	Budget Rates income following the completion of the NNDR1 return on 31 January 2023
Change in use of reserve to balance budget	Use of Reserves	(193)	1,347	0	0	0	Adjustment for the changes above
<b>Total of Changes</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,118)</b>	<b>(1,882)</b>	<b>(1,432)</b>	

## GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY 2022/23 TO 2026/27

	Original Budget (Feb-22) 2022/23 £	Total of MTFS Updates (Feb-23) 2022/23 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2022/23 £	Original MTFS (Feb-22) 2023/24 £	Total of MTFS Updates (Feb-23) 2023/24 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2023/24 £	Original MTFS (Feb-22) 2024/25 £	Total of MTFS Updates (Feb-23) 2024/25 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2024/25 £	Original MTFS (Feb-22) 2025/26 £	Total of MTFS Updates (Feb-23) 2025/26 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2025/26 £	Original MTFS (Feb-22) 2026/27 £	Total of MTFS Updates (Feb-23) 2026/27 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2026/27 £
Senior and Corporate Management	2,547,200	(143,600)	2,403,600	2,601,200	29,000	2,630,200	2,643,300	79,800	2,723,100	2,685,400	67,400	2,752,800	2,685,400	42,600	2,728,000
Economic Development and Regeneration	3,368,000	1,158,000	4,526,000	2,223,500	169,100	2,392,600	1,957,700	29,600	1,987,300	1,960,500	(13,300)	1,947,200	1,960,500	(203,100)	1,757,400
Financial Services and Other Financial Transactions	(31,700)	338,300	306,600	2,600	61,200	63,800	40,200	53,100	93,300	66,000	63,000	129,000	66,000	91,600	157,600
Revenue and Benefits	2,372,000	487,600	2,859,600	2,545,600	584,300	3,129,900	2,703,200	389,100	3,092,300	2,781,100	431,200	3,212,300	2,781,100	512,100	3,293,200
Digital and Programme Management	2,977,100	320,600	3,297,700	2,994,900	465,900	3,460,800	3,036,300	471,500	3,507,800	3,076,000	496,400	3,572,400	3,076,000	577,300	3,653,300
Internal Audit Services	543,400	(46,100)	497,300	542,900	129,600	672,500	558,900	109,400	668,300	572,600	119,300	691,900	572,600	143,200	715,800
Human Resources	864,100	39,500	903,600	804,300	263,600	1,067,900	740,800	581,000	1,321,800	687,500	654,500	1,342,000	687,500	711,100	1,398,600
Legal and Democratic Services	2,312,000	253,200	2,565,200	2,709,300	231,000	2,940,300	2,397,700	232,800	2,630,500	2,441,600	231,900	2,673,500	2,441,600	268,400	2,710,000
Planning and Coastal Management	4,411,800	(98,800)	4,313,000	4,619,900	312,100	4,932,000	4,852,500	205,800	5,058,300	4,864,200	353,500	5,217,700	4,864,200	413,100	5,277,300
Customer Experience Strategic Management	2,361,900	68,600	2,430,500	2,435,100	87,900	2,523,000	2,510,300	164,500	2,674,800	2,584,100	166,800	2,750,900	2,584,100	242,700	2,826,800
Operations	11,588,400	3,911,900	15,500,300	10,397,100	4,664,900	15,062,000	10,232,800	3,913,100	14,145,900	10,330,500	3,747,300	14,077,800	10,330,500	3,704,800	14,035,300
Communities	2,630,700	1,072,700	3,703,400	1,076,400	2,134,200	3,210,600	1,083,700	1,086,100	2,169,800	1,080,100	948,100	2,028,200	1,080,100	729,100	1,809,200
Environmental Services and Port Health	1,499,300	827,200	2,326,500	(1,611,700)	4,688,600	3,076,900	(1,327,500)	3,197,200	1,869,700	(1,007,300)	2,924,200	1,916,900	(1,007,300)	2,997,200	1,989,900
Housing Services	4,976,600	786,100	5,762,700	4,340,800	730,500	5,071,300	4,371,100	321,700	4,692,800	4,390,100	302,800	4,692,900	4,390,100	272,200	4,662,300
<b>Net Cost of Service</b>	<b>42,420,800</b>	<b>8,975,200</b>	<b>51,396,000</b>	<b>35,681,900</b>	<b>14,551,900</b>	<b>50,233,800</b>	<b>35,801,000</b>	<b>10,834,700</b>	<b>46,635,700</b>	<b>36,512,400</b>	<b>10,493,100</b>	<b>47,005,500</b>	<b>36,512,400</b>	<b>10,502,300</b>	<b>47,014,700</b>
<b>Non-Cost of Service Expenditure Adjustments</b>															
Direct Revenue Financing (DRF)	3,020,000	2,400,000	5,420,000	1,375,000	(146,000)	1,229,000	675,000	230,000	905,000	805,000	0	805,000	805,000	0	805,000
Revenue provision for the repayment of debt (MRP)	1,265,000	(58,300)	1,206,700	1,735,000	7,500	1,742,500	2,455,000	299,900	2,754,900	2,575,000	822,800	3,397,800	2,575,000	1,347,700	3,922,700
Recharges to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	(1,424,300)	14,900	(1,409,400)	(1,462,000)	40,900	(1,421,100)	(1,491,900)	71,000	(1,420,900)	(1,506,800)	75,700	(1,431,100)	(1,506,800)	45,100	(1,461,700)
Bad Debt Provision	5,000	(15,800)	(10,800)	5,000	(19,400)	(14,400)	5,000	(14,300)	(9,300)	5,000	(14,300)	(9,300)	5,000	(7,900)	(2,900)
Other Accounting Adjustments	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000
REFCUS Expenditure	(2,721,400)	0	(2,721,400)	(2,721,400)	0	(2,721,400)	(2,721,400)	0	(2,721,400)	(2,721,400)	0	(2,721,400)	(2,721,400)	0	(2,721,400)
<b>Other Operating Expenditure</b>															
Town & Parish Precepts	6,748,500	346,300	7,094,800	6,748,500	346,300	7,094,800	6,748,500	346,300	7,094,800	6,748,500	346,300	7,094,800	6,748,500	346,300	7,094,800
Levies	247,900	0	247,900	250,500	0	250,500	250,500	0	250,500	250,500	0	250,500	250,500	0	250,500
<b>Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure</b>															
Interest Payable	450,000	0	450,000	366,000	0	366,000	282,000	0	282,000	282,000	0	282,000	282,000	0	282,000
Interest Receivable	(650,000)	(886,000)	(1,536,000)	(650,000)	(1,030,000)	(1,680,000)	(650,000)	(760,000)	(1,410,000)	(650,000)	(760,000)	(1,410,000)	(650,000)	(760,000)	(1,410,000)
HRA Share of Interest Payable & Receivable	12,700	107,200	119,900	(4,000)	124,000	120,000	30,400	129,800	160,200	75,900	124,500	200,400	75,900	124,500	200,400
Other Financing Charges	409,100	0	409,100	386,300	0	386,300	386,300	0	386,300	386,300	0	386,300	386,300	0	386,300
<b>Non-Specific Grant Income</b>															
New Homes Bonus	(1,648,700)	0	(1,648,700)	0	(447,000)	(447,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other non-ringfenced grants	0	(61,300)	(61,300)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Grants	(6,400)	(63,000)	(69,400)	0	(35,900)	(35,900)	0	(400)	(400)	0	(400)	(400)	0	(400)	(400)
<b>Net Budget Expenditure before Reserve Movements</b>	<b>48,153,200</b>	<b>10,759,200</b>	<b>58,912,400</b>	<b>41,735,800</b>	<b>13,392,300</b>	<b>55,128,100</b>	<b>41,795,400</b>	<b>11,137,000</b>	<b>52,932,400</b>	<b>42,787,400</b>	<b>11,087,700</b>	<b>53,875,100</b>	<b>42,787,400</b>	<b>11,597,600</b>	<b>54,385,000</b>

## GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY 2022/23 TO 2026/27

	Original Budget (Feb-22) 2022/23 £	Total of MFTS Updates (Feb-23) 2022/23 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2022/23 £	Original MFTS (Feb-22) 2023/24 £	Total of MFTS Updates (Feb-23) 2023/24 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2023/24 £	Original MFTS (Feb-22) 2024/25 £	Total of MFTS Updates (Feb-23) 2024/25 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2024/25 £	Original MFTS (Feb-22) 2025/26 £	Total of MFTS Updates (Feb-23) 2025/26 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2025/26 £	Original MFTS (Feb-22) 2026/27 £	Total of MFTS Updates (Feb-23) 2026/27 £	Revised Budget (Feb-23) 2026/27 £
Net Movements on Reserves									0			0			0
General Fund Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Earmarked Reserves									0			0			0
Use of Reserves for Services/Projects/Corporate	(4,434,700)	(4,047,900)	(8,482,600)	1,311,200	(5,903,000)	(4,591,800)	2,259,700	(4,796,500)	(2,536,800)	1,839,000	(3,430,300)	(1,591,300)	1,839,000	(3,015,200)	(1,176,200)
Use of Covid-19 Reserve	(6,629,000)	3,010,900	(3,618,100)	(788,200)	(365,100)	(1,153,300)	0	(32,400)	(32,400)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reserve Balances Not Required	0	(1,844,000)	(1,844,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Use of Reserves to Balance the Budget	549,100	(1,646,900)	(1,097,800)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Reserves	(1,617,000)	(2,797,000)	(4,414,000)	(328,000)	96,000	(232,000)	372,000	(280,000)	92,000	242,000	(50,000)	192,000	242,000	(50,000)	192,000
Net Budget Expenditure After Reserve Movements	36,021,600	3,434,300	39,455,900	41,930,800	7,220,200	49,151,000	44,427,100	6,028,100	50,455,200	44,868,400	7,607,400	52,475,800	44,868,400	8,532,400	53,400,800
Financed By:															
Council Tax Income (District Council)	(15,688,000)	0	(15,688,000)	(16,277,000)	(90,000)	(16,367,000)	(16,789,000)	(93,000)	(16,882,000)	(17,302,000)	(98,000)	(17,400,000)	(17,302,000)	(620,000)	(17,922,000)
Council Tax Income (Town & Parish Precepts)	(6,748,500)	(346,300)	(7,094,800)	(6,748,500)	(346,300)	(7,094,800)	(6,748,500)	(346,300)	(7,094,800)	(6,748,500)	(346,300)	(7,094,800)	(6,748,500)	(346,300)	(7,094,800)
Council Tax Surplus/Deficit on Collection Fund	(223,000)	0	(223,000)	32,000	(376,100)	(344,100)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rates Income (incl. Section 31 Grant)	(17,877,000)	(3,088,000)	(20,965,000)	(12,924,000)	(8,165,000)	(21,089,000)	(13,182,000)	(6,907,000)	(20,089,000)	(13,446,000)	(5,643,000)	(19,089,000)	(13,446,000)	(5,643,000)	(19,089,000)
Business Rates Surplus/Deficit on Collection Fund	6,393,000	0	6,393,000	785,000	(1,765,500)	(980,500)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rates - Enterprise Zone	(490,300)	0	(490,300)	(490,300)	0	(490,300)	(490,300)	0	(490,300)	(490,300)	0	(490,300)	(490,300)	0	(490,300)
Lower Tier Services Grant	(310,600)	0	(310,600)	(310,600)	310,600	0	(310,600)	310,600	0	(310,600)	310,600	0	(310,600)	310,600	0
Services Grant	(477,400)	0	(477,400)	(477,400)	197,300	(280,100)	(477,400)	208,400	(269,000)	(477,400)	208,400	(269,000)	(477,400)	208,400	(269,000)
Revenue Support Grant	(339,500)	0	(339,500)	(346,300)	(356,500)	(702,800)	(353,200)	13,700	(339,500)	(360,300)	17,400	(342,900)	(360,300)	14,000	(346,300)
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(260,300)	0	(260,300)	(265,500)	(25,400)	(290,900)	(270,800)	10,500	(260,300)	(276,200)	13,300	(262,900)	(276,200)	10,700	(265,500)
Funding Guarantee Allocation	0	0	0	0	(1,511,500)	(1,511,500)	0	(1,519,000)	(1,519,000)	0	(1,519,000)	(1,519,000)	0	(1,519,000)	(1,519,000)
Total Financing	(36,021,600)	(3,434,300)	(39,455,900)	(37,022,600)	(12,128,400)	(49,151,000)	(38,621,800)	(8,322,100)	(46,943,900)	(39,411,300)	(7,056,600)	(46,467,900)	(39,411,300)	(7,584,600)	(46,995,900)
Budget Shortfall / (Surplus)	0	0	0	4,908,200	(4,908,200)	0	5,805,300	(2,294,000)	3,511,300	5,457,100	550,800	6,007,900	5,457,100	947,800	6,404,900



## FINANCIAL PROVISION TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S GREEN AGENDA – CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

**General Fund Revenue Budgets**

Budget Area	Budget 2022/23 £'000	Budget 2023/24 £'000	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Budget 2025/26 £'000	Budget 2026/27 £'000	Comments
Environmental challenge/sustainability/climate change resourcing	117	131	135	139	142	Resourcing to help coordinate and support the delivery of the Council's environmental and climate change commitment.
Fleet decarbonisation, move to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel	307	395	395	395	395	Additional cost of migrating a significant element of the Council's diesel fleet from fossil-fuel derived diesel to HVO.
Green Print	3	3	3	3	3	Annual contribution to the Green Print Forum.
Green Print – Nature Small Grants Scheme	10	0	0	0	0	Funded from the Climate change Reserve.
Green Print – Sustainable Travel	40	0	0	0	0	Project related to quiet lanes funded from the Climate Change Reserve.
Green Print – Plastic Action	1	0	0	0	0	Funded from the Climate Change Reserve.
Local Air Quality Management (LAQM)	20	20	20	20	20	Budget for Air Quality Management works.
ESH Green Space Maintenance	10	10	10	10	10	Environmentally friendly planting for bees/wildlife corridors.
Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership	17	0	0	0	0	Funding to support the partnership.
Design & Conservation Team Resourcing	133	138	144	147	150	Design and conservation Team –(one existing post and one new post) which look at the environmental impact of planning applications.
<b>Total</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>720</b>	

## FINANCIAL PROVISION TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S GREEN AGENDA – CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

**Reserves**

Reserve Name	Balance 31 March 2022 £'000	Balance 31 March 2023 £'000	Balance 31 March 2024 £'000	Balance 31 March 2025 £'000	Balance 31 March 2026 £'000	Balance 31 March 2027 £'000	Purpose of Reserve
Transformation Reserve – Environmental Theme	500	296	296	296	296	296	Funding set aside in the Transformation Reserve to support Initiatives under the 'Caring for Our Environment' Strategic theme.
Air Quality Reserve	80	3	3	3	3	3	Funds held for large scale projects that may require Air Quality works to be carried out.
Climate Change	63	12	12	12	12	12	To provide an additional source of finance for initiatives to reduce climate change and to promote energy efficiency (includes external funding).

## GENERAL FUND RESERVE SUMMARY 2022/23 TO 2026/27

East Suffolk Council

East Suffolk General Fund and Earmarked Reserves

East Suffolk General Fund and Earmarked Reserves		2022/23				2023/24			2024/25			2025/26			2026/27		
		Actual Closing Balance 31/03/22 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Budgeted Closing Balance 31/3/23 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Budgeted Closing Balance 31/3/24 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Revised Closing Balance 31/3/25 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Revised Closing Balance 31/3/26 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Revised Closing Balance 31/3/27 £'000
Revenue Balances:	Reserve Group																
General Fund	Unallocated Financial Reserves	6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000
General Fund Balance		6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000	0	0	6,000
Earmarked Reserves - Revenue:																	
Active Suffolk	Planned Future Revenue Spending	776	101	(99)	778	9	(279)	508	9	(284)	233	79	(311)	1	314	(314)	1
Actuarial Contributions	Risk Based	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	0	200
Additional Disabled Facilities Grant(DFG) funding (Non-Ringfenced)	Grants/Funding carried forward	10	0	(10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Afgan Interpreter grant funding	Grants/Funding carried forward	0	53	0	53	0	0	53	0	0	53	0	0	53	0	0	53
Air Quality	Planned Future Revenue Spending	80	0	(77)	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3
Better Broadband	Planned Future Revenue Spending	7	0	(7)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Budget Carry Forward Requests	Planned Future Revenue Spending	266	0	(266)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Building Control	Planned Future Revenue Spending	516	0	(91)	425	0	(54)	371	0	(54)	317	0	(54)	264	0	(54)	210
Business Incentive	Grants/Funding carried forward	2	0	(2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rate Equalisation	Risk Based	15,240	0	(44)	15,196	2,461	(158)	17,499	0	(35)	17,465	0	0	17,465	0	0	17,465
Business Rates Pilot	Planned Future Revenue Spending	1,385	0	(603)	782	0	(83)	699	0	0	699	0	(37)	661	0	(37)	624
Business Rates SPSL	Planned Future Revenue Spending	1,317	0	(364)	952	0	(231)	722	0	0	722	0	0	722	0	0	722
Brexit	Grants/Funding carried forward	144	0	(144)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Climate Change	Planned Future Revenue Spending	63	0	(51)	12	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	12
Coastal Management	Planned Future Revenue Spending	379	0	(53)	326	0	(55)	271	0	0	271	0	0	271	0	0	271
Communities	Grants/Funding carried forward	2,484	25	(1,004)	1,505	0	(899)	606	0	(14)	592	0	0	592	0	0	592
Community Housing Fund	Grants/Funding carried forward	2,067	0	(382)	1,685	0	(373)	1,313	0	(0)	1,313	0	(0)	1,312	0	(0)	1,312
Customer Services	Planned Future Revenue Spending	326	0	0	326	0	0	326	0	0	326	0	0	326	0	0	326
COVID-19 Response	COVID Reserve	5,882	51	(4,747)	1,186	0	(1,153)	32	0	(32.3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contractual Liability	Risk Based	413	0	0	413	0	0	413	0	0	413	0	0	413	0	0	413
District Elections	Planned Future Revenue Spending	200	60	0	260	60	(220)	100	60	0	160	60	0	220	60	0	280
Domestic Violence Support Funding	Grants/Funding carried forward	218	0	(89)	129	0	(42)	87	0	(44)	43	0	0	43	0	0	43
Deployment of Flood Barrier	Planned Future Revenue Spending	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88	0	0	88
Economic Development	Planned Future Revenue Spending	1,024	47	(1,024)	47	0	(4)	43	0	(4)	40	0	(5)	35	0	(7)	28
Economic Regeneration	Planned Future Revenue Spending	81	11	(37)	55	0	0	55	0	0	55	0	0	55	0	0	55
Empty Properties and Houses in disrepair	Planned Future Revenue Spending	236	0	(1)	235	0	(5)	230	0	(5)	225	0	(5)	220	0	(5)	216
Enterprise Zone	Planned Future Revenue Spending	560	426	(387)	599	441	(306)	734	441	(306)	870	441	(306)	1,005	437	(303)	1,139
Environmental Protection	Planned Future Revenue Spending	68	0	0	68	0	0	68	0	0	68	0	0	68	0	0	68
Flood Prevention	Risk Based	6	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	6
Fuel Payments	Grants/Funding carried forward	6	0	(6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Felixstowe Forwards	Planned Future Revenue Spending	18	0	(11)	8	0	0	8	0	0	8	0	0	8	0	0	8
Food Safety	Planned Future Revenue Spending	195	0	(103)	92	0	0	92	0	0	92	0	0	92	0	0	92
Growth Programme	Planned Future Revenue Spending	64	0	0	64	0	0	64	0	0	64	0	0	64	0	0	64
LAD 2 - SCC - Greener Homes Funding	Grants/Funding carried forward	195	0	0	195	0	0	195	0	0	195	0	0	195	0	0	195
Gypsy and Traveller Macerator	Grants/Funding carried forward	26	14	0	40	0	0	40	0	0	40	0	0	40	0	0	40
Heritage Action Zone North	Grants/Funding carried forward	10	0	(10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Benefit (HB) Subsidy	Risk Based	300	0	(300)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HCA Development Grant	Grants/Funding carried forward	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75	0	0	75
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) - Area Action Plan (AAP) land contamination grant	Grants/Funding carried forward	162	0	(19)	143	0	(24)	119	0	0	119	0	0	119	0	0	119
Homelessness Prevention	Grants/Funding carried forward	91	0	(91)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homelessness Prevention (New)	Planned Future Revenue Spending	273	0	(272)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homelessness New Burdens	Grants/Funding carried forward	73	0	0	73	0	0	73	0	0	73	0	0	73	0	0	73
Homelessness- Rough Sleeper	Grants/Funding carried forward	172	0	(143)	29	0	(3)	26	0	(6)	20	0	0	20	0	0	20

## GENERAL FUND RESERVE SUMMARY 2022/23 TO 2026/27

East Suffolk Council

East Suffolk General Fund and Earmarked Reserves

Revenue Balances:	Reserve Group	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Earmarked Reserves - Revenue:</b>																	
Homelessness - Flexible Homelessness Grant	Grants/Funding carried forward	365	0	0	365	0	0	365	0	0	365	0	0	365	0	0	365
Homelessness	Planned Future Revenue Spending	13	7	0	19	0	0	19	0	0	19	0	0	19	0	0	19
Hoarding Support PSH	Planned Future Revenue Spending	26	0	(26)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Human Resources	Planned Future Revenue Spending	10	0	(10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Advisory Programme	Planned Future Revenue Spending	25	0	(25)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Household Support Grant	Planned Future Revenue Spending	0	72	0	72	0	0	72	0	0	72	0	0	72	0	0	72
Individual Electoral Registration (IER)	Planned Future Revenue Spending	457	0	(50)	407	0	(50)	357	0	(50)	307	0	(50)	257	0	(50)	207
Indoor Leisure	Planned Future Revenue Spending	50	0	0	50	0	(50)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance	Risk Based	171	0	0	171	0	0	171	0	0	171	0	0	171	0	0	171
In-Year Savings	Risk Based	3,572	0	(1,311)	2,261	10	(80)	2,191	20	0	2,211	20	0	2,231	10	0	2,241
Key Capital Programme	Planned Future Capital Spending	182	0	(80)	101	0	(101)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Land Charges	Planned Future Revenue Spending	150	0	(50)	100	0	(50)	50	0	(50)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Landguard	Grants/Funding carried forward	86	90	0	176	46	0	222	8	0	230	6	0	236	4	0	240
Local Development Framework	Planned Future Revenue Spending	5	0	(5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lowestoft Rising	Grants/Funding carried forward	87	1	(47)	41	3	(25)	20	3	(4)	19	0	0	19	0	0	19
Modular ramps - DFG	Grants/Funding carried forward	2	2	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	4
MEES (PSH)	Grants/Funding carried forward	113	0	(113)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	Planned Future Revenue Spending	5,580	1,649	(2,372)	4,857	447	(1,477)	3,827	0	(1,370)	2,457	0	(1,252)	1,205	0	(1,053)	152
Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP)	Grants/Funding carried forward	22	0	0	22	0	0	22	0	0	22	0	0	22	0	0	22
Planning	Planned Future Revenue Spending	400	0	(65)	335	0	(65)	270	0	(65)	205	0	(65)	140	0	(65)	75
Planning Legal	Risk Based	400	0	0	400	0	0	400	0	0	400	0	0	400	0	0	400
Planning Policy	Planned Future Revenue Spending	0	81	0	81	0	0	81	0	0	81	0	0	81	0	0	81
Private Sector Housing	Planned Future Revenue Spending	99	0	(15)	83	0	(10)	73	0	(11)	62	0	(44)	18	0	(17)	1
Protect and Vaccinate	Grants/Funding carried forward	69	0	(55)	14	0	0	14	0	0	14	0	0	14	0	0	14
RAM's	Grants/Funding carried forward	103	0	(55)	48	0	(48)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Renovation Grants	Planned Future Revenue Spending	635	0	(200)	435	0	(105)	330	0	(105)	225	0	(105)	120	0	(105)	15
Rent Guarantee Scheme	Risk Based	15	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	0	15
Revenues & Benefits Administration	Risk Based	243	0	(243)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SEAL	Grants/Funding carried forward	12	0	(4)	8	0	(1)	7	0	(1)	6	0	(1)	5	0	(1)	4
Southwold Harbour	Planned Future Revenue Spending	0	85	0	85	65	0	150	45	0	195	65	0	260	53	0	313
Stepping Homes - West	Grants/Funding carried forward	60	0	(60)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stepping Home	Grants/Funding carried forward	31	0	(31)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S106 Interest	Risk Based	30	0	(30)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transformation - Digital	Planned Future Revenue Spending	296	20	0	316	20	0	336	20	(24)	332	20	(61)	291	20	(61)	250
Transformation - Environmental	Planned Future Revenue Spending	500	0	(204)	296	0	0	296	0	0	296	0	0	296	0	0	296
Transformation - Financial Sustainability	Planned Future Revenue Spending	2,769	265	(1,445)	1,589	45	(929)	705	0	0	705	0	0	705	0	0	705
Warmer Homes Healthy People	Grants/Funding carried forward	151	0	(103)	47	0	(46)	2	0	(1)	1	0	(0)	1	0	(0)	1
Warmer Homes Health People COVID pressures	Grants/Funding carried forward	24	0	(24)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Youth Leisure	Planned Future Revenue Spending	10	0	(10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Earmarked Reserves - Revenue sub-total</b>		<b>52,463</b>	<b>3,058</b>	<b>(17,071)</b>	<b>38,450</b>	<b>3,607</b>	<b>(6,923)</b>	<b>35,134</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>(2,463)</b>	<b>33,277</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>(2,296)</b>	<b>31,672</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>(2,072)</b>	<b>30,498</b>

## GENERAL FUND RESERVE SUMMARY 2022/23 TO 2026/27

East Suffolk General Fund and Earmarked Reserves

Revenue Balances: Reserve Group

Earmarked Reserves - Revenue:

Earmarked Reserves - Port Health:

Port Health Planned Future Revenue Spending Port Health - Planned Future Revenue Spending

RES - Port Health Planned Future Capital Spending Port Health - Planned Future Capital Spending

RES - Port Health ICT Port Health - ICT

RES - Port Health External Funding Port Health - External Funding

**Total Port Health**

Earmarked Reserves - Capital:

Southwold Beach Front Planned Future Capital Spending

Capital Planned Future Capital Spending

Coastal Protection - Capital Works Planned Future Capital Spending

Short Life Assets Planned Future Capital Spending

Earmarked Reserves - Capital sub-total

Total Earmarked Reserves

	2022/23			2023/24			2024/25			2025/26			2026/27		
Actual Closing Balance 31/03/22 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Budgeted Closing Balance 31/3/23 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Budgeted Closing Balance 31/3/24 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Revised Closing Balance 31/3/25 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Revised Closing Balance 31/3/26 £'000	Revised Transfers In £'000	Revised Transfers Out £'000	Revised Closing Balance 31/3/27 £'000
															0
2,071	1,564	(1,101)	2,533	0	(1,822)	711	0	(711)	(0)	0	0	(0)	0	0	(0)
613	0	(613)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
400	73	(400)	73	35	0	107	28	0	135	14	0	149	0	(2)	147
1,230	0	(551)	680	0	(641)	39	0	(28)	11	0	0	11	0	0	11
4,315	1,636	(2,665)	3,286	35	(2,463)	858	28	(739)	146	14	0	160	0	(2)	158
175	0	0	175	0	0	175	0	0	175	0	0	175	0	0	175
3,246	379	(3,354)	271	279	(404)	146	229	(280)	95	279	(30)	344	379	(30)	693
176	0	(115)	61	0	0	61	0	0	61	0	0	61	0	0	61
1,508	618	(1,942)	184	718	(825)	77	768	(625)	220	718	(775)	163	618	(775)	6
5,104	997	(5,411)	690	997	(1,229)	458	997	(905)	550	997	(805)	742	997	(805)	934
61,882	5,691	(25,147)	42,426	4,639	(10,615)	36,449	1,631	(4,107)	33,973	1,702	(3,101)	32,574	1,895	(2,879)	31,589

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[Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities](#)

Policy paper

# Local government finance policy statement 2023-24 to 2024-25

Published 12 December 2022

**Applies to England**



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Today the government sets out its intentions for the local government finance settlement for the next 2 years. For 2023-24, the government recognises that providing councils with greater certainty on key aspects of their funding is incredibly important for their budget setting process and their ability to plan for the future. We will consult on the proposals within this document at the provisional local government finance settlement in the usual way, which will include allocations. This policy statement sets out the following intentions:

For the core settlement:

- The Autumn Statement announced the freezing of the Business Rates Multiplier for 2023-24 at 49.9p. We will compensate local authorities for the reduction in income as a consequence of this decision. From 2023-24 we will align this level of compensation, including the increase in baseline funding levels, with the default link, established by government policy in 2018-19, between the Business Rates Multiplier and the standard Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure rather than the Retail Price Index (RPI).
- We will increase Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in line with CPI.
- We will continue to eliminate so-called 'negative Revenue Support Grant'.

For council tax, the government is giving local authorities in England additional flexibility in setting council tax by:

- Protecting local taxpayers from excessive increases in council tax, by setting the referendum threshold at 3% per year from April 2023 for shire counties, unitary authorities, London boroughs, and the Greater London Authority, without a local referendum. Councils can set higher increases if they wish, via consent of a local referendum.
- In addition, local authorities with social care responsibilities will be able to set an adult social care precept of up to 2% per year, without a referendum.
- A bespoke council tax referendum principle of up to 3% or £5, whichever is higher, for shire districts.



- A bespoke additional council tax flexibility of up to £20 on Band D bills for the Greater London Authority (GLA), as requested by the Mayor of London – while this request will not be opposed, the government is disappointed that London taxpayers are having to foot the bill for the GLA's poor governance and decision-making.
- Setting no council tax referendum principles for Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs).
- Setting no council tax referendum principles for town and parish councils.
- A £5 referendum principle on Band D bills for all fire and rescue authorities. A £15 referendum principle on Band D bills for police and crime commissioners.

It is for individual authorities to determine whether to use the flexibilities detailed above.

The Autumn Statement announced additional funding of up to £2.8 billion in 2023-2024 in England and £4.7 billion in 2024-2025 for social care and discharge. This includes £1 billion of new grant funding in 2023-24 and £1.7 billion in 2024-25, further flexibility for local authorities on council tax and delaying the rollout of adult social care charging reform from October 2023 to October 2025:

- Repurposed money from delaying charging reform:
  - £1.265 billion in 2023-24 and £1.877 billion in 2024-25 will be distributed to local authorities through the Social Care Grant for adult and children's social care. This is in addition to the existing Social Care Grant. We will continue to equalise against the adult social care precept.
- New grant funding:
  - £600 million will be distributed in 2023-24 and £1 billion in 2024-25 through the Better Care Fund to get people out of hospital on time into care settings, freeing up NHS beds for those who need them. The funding will be split 50:50 between the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities' Local Government DEL and the Department for Health and Social Care DEL, meaning Local Government DEL will allocate and distribute £300 million in 2023-24 and £500

million in 2024-25. This will be in addition to the existing improved Better Care Fund, for which the current distribution will remain.

- £400 million in 2023-24 and £683 million in 2024-25 will be distributed through a grant ringfenced for adult social care which will also help to support capacity and discharge. Alongside this, the funding package for adult social care retains £162 million per year of Fair Cost of Care funding and its distribution to reflect the progress councils and providers have made this year on fees and cost of care exercises.

The government expects this new grant funding to enable local authorities to make tangible improvements to adult social care in particular to address discharge delays, social care waiting times, low fee rates and workforce pressures in the adult social care sector. There will be reporting requirements placed on the new Adult Social Care Grant and the Better Care Fund regarding performance and use of funding to support improvement against these objectives. The government will provide further details on reporting in due course.

Remaining settlement grants:

- The Rural Services Delivery Grant will remain unchanged.
- The Services Grant will reduce in 2023-24. This is in part because there will no longer be an increase in National Insurance Contributions, therefore the government will not be compensating local government for these contributions from 2023-24. In addition, some funding will go to increase the funding for the Supporting Families programme. The same as last year, the remainder of the Services Grant will be distributed by the Settlement Funding Assessment.

In recognition of the inflationary pressures across the sector, we will repurpose the Lower Tier Services Grant and a proportion of the expired New Homes Bonus legacy payments to create a new one-off, funding guarantee. This will ensure that all authorities will see at least a 3% increase in their Core Spending Power before any decision they make about organisational efficiencies, use of reserves, and council tax levels.

There will be new rounds of New Homes Bonus (NHB) payments in 2023-24. Although, as with last year, these will not attract new legacy payments. NHB allocations for 2023-24 will continue to be paid for in the usual way. There will be no changes to the calculation process from 2022-23 except the expiration of legacy payments.

The government will be extending the Statutory Override for the Dedicated Schools Grant for the next 3 years from 2023-24 to 2025-26.

### **Other areas of the settlement**

The government notes the significant increase in some local authority reserves over the 2 years of the pandemic. We encourage local authorities to consider how they can use their reserves to maintain services in the face of immediate inflationary pressures, taking account, of course, of the need to maintain appropriate levels of reserves to support councils' financial sustainability and future investment. In order to support council members and local electorates to understand the reserves that their authorities are holding and what they are used for, we will also explore releasing a user-friendly publication of the reserves data currently collected in the Local Authority Revenue Expenditure and Financing Outturn statistics. We will consult with trusted partners, including the Local Government Association, about doing this.

We will be consolidating 4 grants totalling £239 million into the local government finance settlement. All of the 4 grants will keep their existing distribution. These are the Independent Living Fund; Council Tax Discounts – Family Annexe; Local Council Tax Support Administration Subsidy; and Natasha's Law.

All current 100% business rates retention areas will continue for 2023-24. During this time the government will review the role of such arrangements as a source of income for areas and its impact on local economic growth, and as part of deeper devolution commitments as set out in the Levelling Up white paper.

Where requested, we will proceed with Business Rates Pooling for 2023-24.

## **Technical adjustment to the Business Rates Retention system**

The government published a consultation in September that set out its [proposed approach to a technical adjustment to the Business Rates Retention \(BRR\) system](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-adjustment-to-the-business-rates-retention-system-consultation) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-adjustment-to-the-business-rates-retention-system-consultation>) in response to the 2023 revaluation and transfers of properties from local lists to the central list. This work delivers on the commitment made at the outset of the BRR system, that at revaluations the government would adjust local authorities' income to ensure that as far as practicable it is no more, or less, than it would have been had the revaluation not taken place.

We received 43 returns to this consultation, most of which were from local authorities and a government response will be published shortly. Feedback on the proposed methodology was positive, with a majority agreeing with the proposed change to the main revaluation adjustment; four-fifths of respondents agreeing we should not make a further adjustment for reliefs at this time, but keep this under review; and nearly two-thirds agreeing that the adjustment for the central list transfers would adequately safeguard the position of affected local authorities.

The government therefore intends to proceed with this modified revaluation adjustment for the implementation of the 2023 revaluation, with the methodology and adjustments to tariffs and top-ups published alongside the provisional local government finance settlement.

Adjustments will subsequently be made to account for compiled rating list data for the 2023 list as at 1 April 2023 and for Outturn Business Rates data for 2022-23 at the 2024-25 local government finance settlement, with the final adjustment at the 2025-26 settlement. The government will keep the revaluation adjustment under review.

**The government is also providing clarity on areas of the 2024-25 local government finance settlement:**

In the longer-term, our ambitions for Levelling Up the country require us to assess our commitments to update local government funding. The government had previously committed to carry out a Review of Relative Needs and Resources and a reset of accumulated business rates growth. Whilst we can confirm that these will not be implemented in this Spending Review period, the government remains committed to improving the local government finance landscape in the next Parliament.

For 2024-25, the core council tax referendum principles will continue the same as 2023-24. We can confirm that the referendum limit for increases to council tax will remain at 3% per year. In addition, local authorities with social care responsibilities will be able to increase the adult social care precept by up to 2% per year. Councils can set higher increases if they wish via the consent of a local referendum.

The core settlement will continue in a similar manner for 2024-25. The major grants will continue as set out for 2023-24: Revenue Support Grant will continue and be uplifted in line with Baseline Funding Levels; the Social Care Grant and other social care grants will increase as set out at the Autumn Statement. We will proceed with Business Rates Pooling in 2024-25.

2024-25 brings with it a significant new funding stream, subject to successful delivery of the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging (pEPR) scheme as soon as is feasible within this financial year; local authorities can expect to receive additional income from the scheme whilst being asked to submit data relevant to their waste collection services. Alongside His Majesty's Treasury and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, we will be assessing the impact of additional pEPR income on the relative needs and resources of individual local authorities in the coming year.

The government recognises that the position of the lower tier must be understood in the round, therefore we will review the 2024-25 position of funding for lower tier authorities particularly given the possible interactions with the pEPR scheme. We also recognise the need to help councils plan and we will therefore set out the future

position of New Homes Bonus ahead of the 2024-25 local government finance settlement.

The government will provide details on these proposals at the provisional local government finance settlement for 2023-24, including full local authority level allocations for 2023-24 and consultation documents later in December. The government will publish full details of the 2024-25 local government finance settlement in late 2023 at the provisional settlement, in line with the established process.

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## **PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2023/24**

### **1 OVERVIEW**

- 1.1 The Government published the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023-24 on 19 December 2022:
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2023-to-2024>
- <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-19/hcws469>
- 1.2 On 12 December 2022, a Policy Statement announced the key principles that ministers intended to use in the provisional settlement, and these remain unchanged:
- [Local government finance policy statement 2023-24 to 2024-25 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/local-government-finance-policy-statement-2023-24-to-2024-25)
- 1.3 The final 2023/24 settlement is expected to be laid before the House of Commons, for its approval, in late January or early February 2023.
- 1.4 Local government was a major beneficiary of the Autumn Statement 2022, with larger increases in funding than any other part of the public sector. Much of the increase was directed towards social care, but even authorities without social care responsibilities have done better than assumed at the time of the statement.
- 1.5 The settlement is the best in cash terms that local government has received for over a decade. However, against the current background of inflation, the settlement will still leave many local authorities with significant financial pressures in real terms, although authorities with higher levels of deprivation will receive larger increases in Core Spending Power.
- 1.6 The Policy Statement gave local authorities advanced notice of the principles that ministers would use in both the 2023-24 and 2024-25 local government finance settlements. There have been no changes in these principles in the provisional settlement, but there are now financial values to accompany the principles. These are referred to in subsequent sections of this Appendix, and a number of other points to note include the following:
- Council tax referendum principles (see below) have been confirmed for 2023/24 and 2024/25. In considering Core Spending Power, the settlement assumes that all authorities will make use of the maximum increases under these.
  - The Government has confirmed that the Review of Relative Needs and Resources (also known as the Fair Funding Review) and the business rates reset will not be implemented in this Spending Review period.

- Although there are principles in place for 2024/25, this is not a fixed two-year settlement and there remain some uncertainties in respect of the position for that year.

## **2 COUNCIL TAX**

2.1 The Government has confirmed the following referendum principles for 2023/24 and 2024/25:

- A core referendum principle of up to 3 per cent will apply to shire county councils, shire unitary authorities, metropolitan districts and London boroughs.
- Shire districts will have a referendum principle of up to 3 per cent or £5, whichever is higher.
- Social care authorities will be able to set a 2 per cent adult social care precept without a referendum (in addition to the existing basic referendum threshold referred to above).
- Fire and Rescue Authorities will have a principle of up to £5.
- £15 for police authorities and police and crime commissioners.
- £23 for the non-police element of the Greater London Authority (GLA).
- There will be no referendum principles for mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) except where the Mayor exercises police and crime commissioner functions.
- No referendum principles will be set for parish and town councils.

## **3 BUSINESS RATES RETENTION SCHEME (BRRS)**

- 3.1 The decision to freeze the business rates multiplier will be fully funded, and, from 2023/24 onwards, compensation to authorities for under-indexation will be paid based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than the Retail Price Index (RPI).
- 3.2 The business rates multiplier is “frozen” (remaining at 49.9p), but contains a reduction to reflect increases in rateable values in the 2023 Revaluation and an offsetting uplift for inflation. Compensation for this will be part-paid via an uplift to Baseline Funding Level (BFL), with the remainder paid via section 31 grant. The Baseline Funding Level (BFL) has been uplifted by the inflation within the multiplier (3.74%)
- 3.3 A 2023 Revaluation Technical Adjustment has been calculated to offset the impact of revaluation for each local authority. This adjustment is applied to the authority’s top-up or tariff, and ensures that authorities’ do not benefit solely from the effect of valuation changes.
- 3.4 Business Rates pooling and pilots will continue in 2023/24, and Suffolk Chief Finance officers have received a letter from DLUHC confirming that the Suffolk Business Rates Pool will operate in 2023/24.
- 3.5 Business rates and Section 31 Grant estimates for 2023/24 that are currently included in the General Fund Budget and MTFS will be revised following confirmation of relevant details in the Settlement, and will be based on the NNDR1 return to Government, which is due to be completed by 31 January 2023.

## **4 FUNDING**

### **4.1 Revenue Support Grant (RSG)**

Methodology for RSG has not changed, and for 2023/24 RSG will increase at 10.1%. There will continue to be no adjustment for “negative RSG”. Family Annex Council Tax Discount Grant and LCTS Administration Subsidy grant have been rolled into RSG in 2023/24.

### **4.2 New Homes Bonus (NHB)**



New Homes Bonus (NHB) will continue for one (or perhaps two) more years, but there will be no more legacy payments. A decision on whether NHB will continue into 2024-25 will be made before next year's settlement.

#### **4.3 Funding Guarantee Allocation (FGA)**

The Government has announced that it will repurpose the 2022/23 Lower Tier Services Grant and a proportion of the expired New Homes Bonus legacy payments to ensure that all councils will see at least a 3 per cent increase in their Core Spending Power before any decisions about organisational efficiencies, use of reserves or council tax levels. For eligible authorities, the value of the guarantee will be based on the difference between a 3 per cent increase in their 2022/23 Core Spending Power adjusted for actual council tax requirement in 2022/23, compared to their increase in Core Spending Power (excluding rolled in grants) before any assumed increases to council tax Band D levels in 2023/24

#### **4.4 Services Grant**

The Services Grant has been reduced from its 2022/23 level due in part due to the fact that there will no longer be an increase in National Insurance Contributions. The Government has also held a small proportion of the Services Grant back as contingency to cover unexpected movements, and will review whether this contingency is necessary for the final local government finance settlement. Any contingency left unused at that point will go back into the Services Grant.

#### **4.5 Rural Services Funding**

The Government proposes to roll-forward the 2022/23 allocations of the £85 million Rural Service Delivery Grant for 2023/24.

#### **4.6 2024/25**

In addition to the points noted in respect of Policy Statement principles in 1.6 above, the core settlement will continue in a similar manner for 2024/25. The major grants will continue as set out in 2023/24. Revenue Support Grant will be uplifted in line with BFLs so that councils receive an increase equivalent to the September 2023 level of the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), and Business rate pooling will continue.

Local authorities can also expect to receive new income, subject to the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR) coming into force during 2024/25. The Government will assess the impact of additional pEPR income on the relative needs and resources of councils, particularly shire district councils.

#### **4.7 Funding Summary**

A summary of the funding changes (excluding any Business Rate measures) arising from the settlement compared with the assumptions in the revised December 2022 MTFS is shown in the table below.

# East Suffolk Council

## Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 (One Year Settlement) – Funding Allocations

Funding Allocations	ESC December 2022 MTFS 2023/24 £	DLUHC Provisional Settlement 19-Dec-22 2023/24 £	Funding Change between December 2022 MTFS assumptions and the Provisional Settlement (Additional)/Less Grant Income 2023/24 £	Comments
Lower Tier Services Grant	(310,600)	0	<b>310,600</b>	This grant has been abolished from 2023/24 and repurposed towards the Funding Guarantee allocation.
Services Grant	(477,400)	(269,000)	<b>208,400</b>	This grant has been reduced in part due to the removal of funding for the National Insurance increase and to pay for other parts of the settlement such as Revenue Support Grant.
Revenue Support Grant	(339,500)	(702,800)	<b>(363,300)</b>	Provisional Settlement includes - 2022/23 Revenue Support Grant increased by 10.1%, plus other grants rolled into RSG. This includes the Family Annexe Council Tax Grant £61,300 and Local Council Tax Scheme Administration Grant £267,600.
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(260,300)	(260,300)	<b>0</b>	Roll forward of the 2022/23 grant with no increase.
Local Council Tax Scheme Admin Subsidy Grant	(271,600)	0	<b>271,600</b>	The provisional settlement proposes to roll this grant into the Revenue Support Grant above - £267,600 for 2023/24.
Funding Guarantee Allocation	0	(1,553,200)	<b>(1,553,200)</b>	This is new funding for 2023/24 to ensure that all councils will see at least a 3% increase in their core spending power before any decisions about organisational efficiencies, use of reserves or council tax levels.
New Homes Bonus	(447,000)	(447,100)	<b>(100)</b>	One year allocation with no legacy payments.
<b>Total</b>	<b>(2,106,400)</b>	<b>(3,232,400)</b>	<b>(1,126,000)</b>	

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2023-to-2024>

## FLEXIBLE USE OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2024/25

### 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In the 2022/23 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement the following was announced:

***Extension of the flexibility to use capital receipts to fund transformation projects***

*We are also announcing a 3-year extension from 2022-23 onwards of the existing flexibility for councils to use capital receipts to fund transformation projects that produce long-term savings or reduce the costs of service delivery. We will provide further details on the extension in due course.*

- 1.2 On 4 April 2022, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities confirmed this extension and published Guidance and a Direction, which are attached as Annexes.
- 1.3 The Council has previously produced strategies over the period 2016/17 to 2021/22 in respect of the previous flexibility. The Strategy was updated and produced for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 in the light of the extension and revised Guidance, and was approved by Full Council on 27 July 2022.

### 2 OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

- 2.1 This Strategy is intended to enable the Council to potentially take advantage of this flexibility if appropriate. The Strategy forms part of the delivery of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan and particularly supports the theme of Financial Sustainability. The East Suffolk Strategic Plan focusses on the five key themes of:

- Economic Growth
- Enabling Communities
- Financial Sustainability
- Digital Transformation
- The Environment

- 2.2 The objectives of this Strategy are to:

- Outline the methodology for funding projects using this flexibility;
- Identify actual and potential capital receipts that could be utilised to fund transformation projects;
- Identify projects that are considered to be eligible and which could be funded by this method;
- In subsequent years, report on the progress of projects approved in previous years.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Strategy was approved by Full Council on 27 July 2022 and submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Guidance. For 2023/24 and 2024/25 it will be approved by Full Council as part of the approval of the Council's Budget. If required, a revised Strategy can be prepared during the course of the year to reflect significant changes to both the range and potential funding value of eligible projects.
- 3.2 Key projects will be monitored by the Strategic Plan Theme Delivery Groups, with oversight across the Council being maintained by the Financial Sustainability Theme Group.
- 3.3 To make use of this flexibility, capital receipts must arise in the period 2016/17 to 2024/25, and qualifying expenditure must take place in the same period. For example, a capital receipt realised in 2016/17 could finance a project in 2024/25, but not in 2025/26. Capital receipts realised before 2016/17 cannot be used.
- 3.4 If projects are identified in the Strategy, they can still be financed in whole or in part from other sources, e.g. revenue budgets. Having approved the Strategy, the Council is not obliged to fund these projects from capital receipts. It is Council policy that capital receipts are not relied upon to fund any expenditure until they are realised and as new capital receipts might not necessarily be available during the period of the Strategy, it is essential that eligible projects should only proceed if alternative sources of funding have been identified. Inclusion in the strategy does not constitute a commitment to fund through capital receipts as this decision needs to be taken in the light of the Council's overall revenue and capital financing requirements, nor does inclusion in the strategy constitute approval to progress a project.
- 3.5 For 2022/23, Cabinet will determine the actual financing when approving the Council's Capital Programme outturn and financing for the year. For 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Council will approve the budgeted funding of the projects in the strategy when approving the Budget and the Capital Programme for the year.

### 4 ELIGIBLE CAPITAL RECEIPTS AND IMPACT ON PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

- 4.1 As at February 2023, the position in respect of eligible Capital Receipts regarding this flexibility is shown below. It should be noted that the flexibility excludes Right-To-Buy capital receipts. It should also be noted that it is Council policy that capital receipts are not relied upon to fund any expenditure until they are realised. Consequently, the planned use of the flexibility shown in Section 5 does not exceed the amount of eligible receipts currently realised and available. This summary will be updated in each annual strategy.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000
<b><i>Eligible General Fund Capital Receipts b/fwd</i></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5,320)</b>	<b>(320)</b>
<b><i>General Fund Capital Receipts Received</i></b>			
Melton Hill	(5,385)	0	0
Lowestoft Eastern Edge Beach Huts	(235)	0	0
<b><i>Allocated against capital expenditure</i></b>			
Operational Vehicles	0	4,000	0
<b><i>Actual or Planned Use of Flexible Use Direction</i></b>			
North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood Masterplanning	300	1,000	200
<b><i>Eligible General Fund Capital Receipts c/fwd</i></b>	<b>(5,320)</b>	<b>(320)</b>	<b>(120)</b>

- 4.2 As it is Council policy not to rely on capital receipts until they are realised, these capital receipts have not been factored into the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) by way of either reducing debt or financing capital expenditure. Consequently, the use of these receipts under this flexibility will have no effect on the Council's Prudential Indicators.

## **5 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND USE OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS 2023/24**

- 5.1 A summary of projects identified included in this Strategy as being potentially eligible for capital receipts funding is summarised below, with a description of the project, project objectives, and potential planned use of receipts. This list is not definitive and further potentially eligible projects could be identified during the course of the year – if this is the case, further revisions will be made to the Strategy.

Project	Description and Progress	Service Transformation / Savings	Lead Team	Cabinet Portfolio	Planned Use of Receipts 2023/24
					£000
<b>North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood</b>	<p>Key leisure-led regeneration programme in Felixstowe focused upon the creation of new leisure centre to replace ageing and expensive leisure centres, and housing development. Programme could entail development of housing by ESC either directly or through a development company to generate significant future income streams. ESC has made provision for capital expenditure in the Capital Programme, but significant revenue expenditure will be incurred on Planning, design, and feasibility work. ESC land in the programme could facilitate development or potentially generate capital receipts generating investment interest / reducing debt.</p> <p>Full Council on 28 September 2022 approved that the Council carries out whole site master planning and enables progression toward securing outline planning consent for the full North Felixstowe site allocation (or at least the parts where the Council has an interest), with the cost of this work up to £1.5m to be funded from capital receipts in accordance with the Council's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.</p> <p>Progress – Ongoing – medium term regeneration programme spanning around 6 – 7 years.</p>	<p>Replacement of leisure centres estimated to reduce net costs by around £400k pa when fully operational. Significant capital receipts and/or income streams could also potentially be generated.</p>	Regeneration	Deputy Leader & Economic Development	1,000
<b>Set Up of East Suffolk Services Ltd (ESSL) Local Authority Trading Company</b>	<p>Business Case to set up ESSL approved in June 2021, to replace current Joint Venture arrangements from July 2023. Services include refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing, grounds maintenance, car parking, building maintenance, and facilities management. ICT infrastructure, systems, support service arrangements, asset procurement, and company structure to be established. Service improvements, cost savings and efficiencies to be identified and implemented. Total transformation costs are estimated to be in the region of £1.6m, and</p>	<p>Business Case identified ongoing cost savings of £1.0m from 2023 onwards. Service and environmental improvements to also be delivered.</p>	SMT	Customer Services and Operational Partnerships	

Project	Description and Progress	Service Transformation / Savings	Lead Team	Cabinet Portfolio	Planned Use of Receipts 2023/24
					£000
	<p>are currently budgeted to be met from the Transformation Reserve. Pre-trading costs being directly incurred by ESSL are to be funded by way of a market-rate loan from ESC.</p> <p>Progress – Company established, notice served for termination of Joint Venture, project on track for transfer of services in 2023.</p>				

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2003 – REPORT BY THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER ON THE ADEQUACY OF RESERVES AND ROBUSTNESS OF BUDGET ESTIMATES**

Agenda Item 9  
ES/1457

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer to formally report to Council as part of the tax setting report on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves. The Council is required to take this report into account when setting the Budget and Council Tax at its meeting on 22 February 2023.
- 1.2 In the context of its service and financial planning the Council's overall approach to risk management is to take appropriate action to mitigate risks, or ensure that sufficient contingency exists, so that service provision is not threatened by unforeseen financial problems during the financial year.
- 1.3 Making changes to service provision at short notice in order to resolve a budget problem can have undesirable consequences. These can include:
  - (a) damage to the Council's reputation and customer relationships if services are unavailable or delayed
  - (b) failure to meet agreed performance targets
  - (c) inefficiencies in overall service provision
  - (d) associated costs of reducing service provision, such as staff redundancies, when planning changes over a longer timescale would allow greater flexibility
  - (e) potential problems for partner organisations that are dependent upon Council financial support to achieve agreed goals.
- 1.4 To avoid such problems the Council manages its financial risks by ensuring that its annual budget represents a reasonable estimate of the costs of providing agreed service levels. It also holds appropriate balances and reserves so that resources are available to allow a managed and considered response should any significant variations or emergencies arise.
- 1.5 This report considers:
  - The Council's financial governance regime
  - The robustness of the budget
  - Review of Earmarked Reserves
  - Adequacy of General Fund balances.
  - Financial Standing

## **2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, BUDGETARY CONTROL, AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 2.1 East Suffolk Council operates a comprehensive and effective range of financial management policies. These are contained in the Financial Procedure Rules, which form part of the Council's Constitution. This Constitution is available on the Council's website. The Financial Procedure Rules were reviewed and amended, and a revised set of rules were put in place for 2022/23.



These rules are constantly being evaluated and reviewed in the light of operational considerations and changing circumstances, and further amendments will be made in 2023/24.

- 2.2 The Council conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and reports on this in the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.3 The Council continues to implement effective risk management policies, identifying corporate, operational and budget risks and mitigating strategies.
- 2.4 The internal and external audit functions play a key role in ensuring that the Council's financial controls and governance arrangements are operating satisfactorily.
- 2.5 This is backed up by the review processes of Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee, and the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 2.6 East Suffolk has a good record of budget and financial management and is expecting a balanced position for April 2023 to March 2024. All relevant reports to Council, Cabinet, and Committees have their financial implications identified and the links to the Financial Sustainability theme of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan is outlined. Emerging budget pressures are kept under review during the year and this has been particularly important over the last three years with the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, high inflation and the cost of living crisis. The Council's budget has been particularly volatile in 2022/23 as a result of these pressures.
- 2.7 Strategic risk management is embedded throughout the Council to ensure that all risks are identified, mitigated and managed appropriately. The Council's insurance arrangements are in the form of external insurance premiums and internal funds to self-insure some items.
- 2.8 Projects are subject to business case challenge on financial and risk matters and to reflect their importance in delivery of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan and achievement of Financial Sustainability.
- 2.9 Income assumptions, particularly on the Council's key income streams of Council Tax and Business Rates, are subject to continual review and are reported on a monthly basis on the Council's intranet.
- 2.10 In October 2019, CIPFA published the Financial Management Code (FM Code), which provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities and will provide assurance that authorities are managing resources effectively. The FM Code applies a principle-based approach which requires that a local authority demonstrates that its processes satisfy the principles of good financial management for an authority of its size, responsibilities and circumstances. Following on from the principles of the FM Code, there are 7 areas of focus, supported by a set of guidance standards against which Councils should be assessed.
- 2.11 Using these standards, and key questions within the guidance, the Chief Finance Officer carried out a self-assessment of current processes, procedures, and governance arrangements, which was reported to the Audit and Governance Committee in December 2021.
- 2.12 This self-assessment has rated the majority of standards to be fully compliant with no areas rated as non-compliant. Areas for further development were identified and the self-assessment will be revisited in 2023/24.

### 3. ROBUSTNESS OF THE 2023/24 ESTIMATES AND TAX CALCULATIONS

- 3.1 The Budget and Council Tax calculations for 2023/24 are based upon forecasts of expenditure, income and Council Tax revenues up to 31 March 2024, with some significant assumptions made in order to prepare these forecasts. When setting its Council Tax for 2023/24 the Council needs to be satisfied that these assumptions are reasonable. In order to ensure the robustness of the budgeting, the Council's budget process commenced in September 2022 and progressed with Cabinet's consideration of the MTFS in November 2022 and the draft Budget in January 2023. Scrutiny Committee considered this in January 2023.
- 3.2 All areas of budgets have been reviewed by Heads of Service. In addition, a number of budgets are subject to overall cross-service review, including the Council's employee budgets.
- 3.3 The pay award for staff from 1 April 2022 was agreed at a flat-rate increase of £1,925. Budget and MTFS estimates are for a 4% increase in 2023/24, a 3% increase in 2024/25, and a 2% increase for 2025/26 onwards. Reflecting staff turnover, an in-year vacancy allowance of 4% of staffing costs is maintained. Inflation assumptions are based on CPI forecasts and actual experience in specific sectors. Both pay and general inflation represents risks to the Council's budget and MTFS in the current environment of high inflation and volatility.
- 3.4 Budgeted increases for fees and charges are based on three key principles: cost recovery, market value and inflationary increases. The budget also includes those increases that are set and proposed by Government. However, in setting fees and charges for 2023/24, the Council has also been mindful of the cost of living crisis and the ability to pay of the district's communities.
- 3.5 Although interest rates are still at historically relatively low levels, interest rates have increased rapidly over the past year in response to inflation concern, increasing investment returns to the Council. Security of the Council's cash is the over-riding consideration in setting its Treasury Management Policy Statement. During the year the Council constantly receives advice from its Treasury Advisors with regard to the creditworthiness of financial institutions.
- 3.6 Business Rates is a key income stream to the Council. Significant reform in the local government finance system which will include resetting Business Rates baselines has now been further deferred until 2025/26 at the earliest, although 2026/27 is more likely. Reset of the system and the establishment of new funding formulae is likely to result in the Council losing a degree of financial advantage under the current system, which derives from the fact that actual Business Rates income is above the baseline in the system which was set at a low level in 2013/14. Budgeted figures for rates income and Section 31 Grant in 2023/24 and 2024/25 are based on the 2023/24 NNDR1 return, with the 2024/25 including a £1m reduction in estimated Suffolk Business Rates Pool benefit to cover uncertainties associated with the start of a new valuation period using a provisional rating valuation list. The 2025/26 and 2026/27 forecast figures are rolled forward cash figures and include a further £1m reduction reflecting the potential of a reset of the system. 2023/24 shows a significantly improved position on Business Rates income and surplus income from Business Rates, over and above addressing the budget gap for next year, has been transferred to the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve. This amounts to £2.46m and increases the balance on this reserve to £17.5m as at 31 March 2024.
- 3.7 Council Tax income was subject to financial impacts as a result of the pandemic, but also not to the extent that was previously anticipated. To a large extent, the position on the tax base has returned to projected pre-pandemic levels.

- 3.8 The Council is required to complete a range of calculations (Prudential Indicators) to evidence that borrowing for capital expenditure is affordable, prudent and sustainable over the medium term. This makes sure that the cost of paying for interest charges and repayment of principal by a minimum revenue contribution (MRP) each year is taken into account when drafting the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Council has a large and ambitious Capital Programme and external funding and the realisation of capital receipts will be important in ensuring affordability and delivery of the programme.

#### **4. ADEQUACY OF RESERVES AND BALANCES**

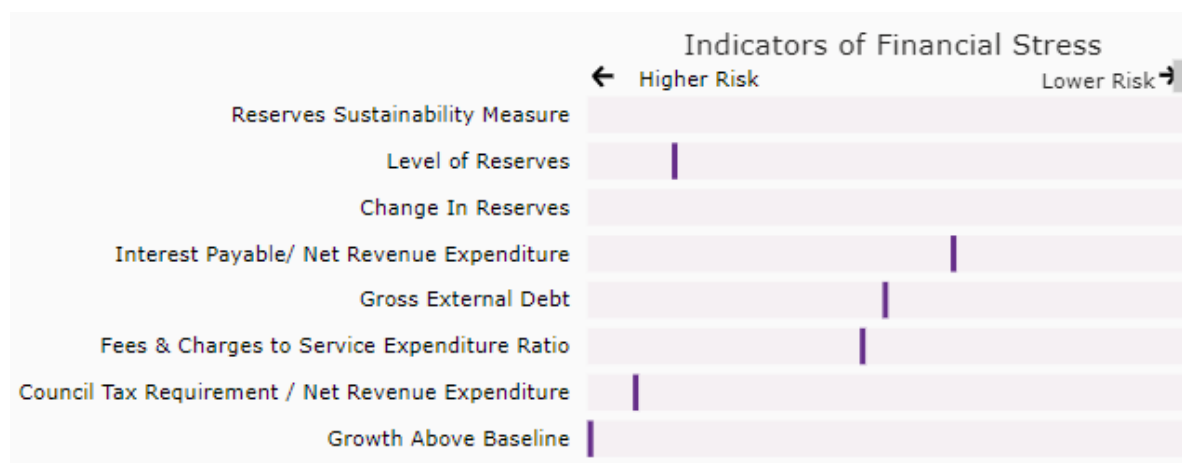
- 4.1 The Council holds a very significant value of funds in reserves and balances to enable it to plan and manage its finances soundly. In addition to the Council's General Fund which will have a balance of £6 million as at 1 April 2023, the Council's earmarked reserves are estimated to stand at around £42 million going into next year.
- 4.2 Main budget risks and sensitivity to the Council's key in-year income and expenditure variables in 2023/24 are referred to below:
- Cost of living crisis impacts, especially potential increases in homelessness and temporary accommodation costs
  - Inflationary pressures, especially continuing high energy costs
  - Uncertainty regarding business rates income relating to the 2023 revaluation
  - Local government pay award levels
- 4.3 In response to risk, sensitivity, and uncertainty, the Council has continued to develop its prudent financial management arrangements, through the development of earmarked reserves. Broadly speaking, the Council holds earmarked reserves to:
- a) Comply with statutory requirements or proper accounting practice;
  - b) To mitigate potential future risks or smooth year-to-year fluctuations in income or expenditure;
  - c) To earmark resources for future spending plans or potential liabilities.
- 4.4 For the purposes of this report, around £13 million, principally in the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve, is available in category b) above, this This represents a very high level of coverage of risk and volatility in addition to the General Fund Balance.
- 4.5 As far as the General Fund Balance itself is concerned, the financial challenges and opportunities facing the Council over the medium term mean that the Council should continue to maintain a robust level of General Fund Balance of about 3% to 5% of budgeted gross expenditure, equating to about £4 million to £6 million.

#### **5. FINANCIAL STANDING**

- 5.1 As part of the consideration of the financial standing of the council, CIPFA provide a financial resilience index. This is a comparative analytical tool that may be used by Chief Financial Officers to support good financial management. The index shows a council's position on a range of measures associated with financial risk, compared with similar authorities across a range of factors. The index provides a useful snapshot of an authority's position, but needs to

be treated with degree of caution for a number of reasons. Data may be inaccurate or incomplete for comparator authorities; the assessment of risk associated with an indicator may be open to different interpretations; and indicators may be misleading. Chief Finance Officers nationally continue to be in a dialogue with CIPFA as to how the Index can be improved.

- 5.2 The overall picture for East Suffolk as set out below based on 2021/22 outturn data is one of average or lower risk across the indicators. Overall, the Index gives no cause for concern, but does reflect some of the issues with the indicators referred to above. An example of this is that nearly all of the Council's Gross External Debt relates to HRA self-financing, whilst comparator authorities might not necessarily have housing stock. The only higher risk indicators relate to level of Reserves, Council Tax requirement proportionate to our net revenue expenditure, and Business Rates Growth above Baseline. Categorisation of reserves is subject to inconsistent treatment and reporting between authorities, an issue that DLUHC and CIPFA have undertaken to review next year, and the Council's level of reserves is likely to be understated in this indicator. Council Tax Requirement as a proportion of budget reflects the council's level of council tax, and other significant income streams, such as business rates and fees and charges. As council tax is a statutory charge, the interpretation in the Index is that councils are seen to have a greater financial resilience the higher the council tax requirement is as a proportion of net expenditure. This is a matter of opinion – arguably a lack of diversification of income streams and over reliance on one source could equally constitute higher risk. The Business Rates Growth above Baseline indicator has long been recognised as a risk – due to reset and reform of the system – in the Council's MTFS, hence the mitigation provided by the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve and cautious MTFS forecasts.



## 6. FUTURE YEARS BEYOND 2023/24

- 6.1 In recent years, the Council's financial position has been largely characterised by the fact that it has been in an advantageous position under the current Business Rates Retention system. Reforms to this system (and implementation of the Fair Funding Review) have been deferred on a number of occasions which has benefitted the Council and has enabled it to build up and maintain a robust Reserves position. This will be important in enabling the Council to adjust to pressures and uncertainties in the medium term and to address underlying budget gaps.
- 6.2 There are prospective activities not yet factored into the MTFS, which have the potential to make inroads into the budget gap towards the end of the MTFS. These include the Council Tax Premium on second homes, expected efficiencies from East Suffolk Services Ltd, and income streams from capital projects.

- 6.3 However, despite these factors, and the uncertainty due to local government finance reforms, the range and scale of expenditure and income pressures indicate that a combination of actions will be needed to ensure a longer term sustainable position including a phased use of reserves as referred to above, maximisation of income, and the achievement of savings.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Overall, the estimates are robust, taking into account known risks and mitigating strategies, and the reserves are adequate for the 2023/24 Budget plans.

Brian Mew (CPFA)

Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer

February 2023

## PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Pay Policy Statement is produced in accordance with Part 1; Chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011 and is available on the website. In addition, the website also includes separately published data on salary information relating to Chief Officers.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that, in the context of managing scarce public resources, remuneration at all levels needs to be adequate to attract and retain high quality employees dedicated to the service of the public, but at the same time needs to reflect that the Council is part of the public sector, funded through the tax payer and not a private sector organisation. As a general principle, the Council believes in rewarding all employees in a fair and equitable manner.
- 1.3 It is important that local authorities are able to determine their own pay policies and structures in order to address local priorities and to compete in the local labour market.

### 2. REMUNERATION OF EMPLOYEES

- 2.1 For employees subject to the 'National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services' (commonly known as the 'Green Book'), the Council uses a pay spine that commences at national Spinal Column Point (SCP) 1 and ends at SCP 53. SCP's 1-43 are nationally agreed, and SCP's 44 -53 are locally agreed.
- 2.2 The pay spine is divided into grades and posts are allocated to a pay band through a process of job evaluation.
- 2.3 For the purpose of this Pay Policy Statement, employees on Salary Band 1 are defined as our lowest paid employees. This is because no permanent and directly employed employee of the Council is paid lower than SCP 1, other than Apprentices who are currently paid at the national Apprentice hourly rate. The Council will retain SCP 1 as the lowest pay rate for all permanent and directly employed staff unless this is superseded by the National Living Wage.
- 2.4 The value of the SCPs in these pay grades are increased by the pay awards notified from time to time by the NJC for Local Government Services. The NJC pay claim for 2023/24 has not yet been agreed by the Joint Trade Union Side (UNISON, GMB and UNITE) as of 6 February 2023.

### 3. REMUNERATION OF CHIEF OFFICERS

#### 3.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is the statutory Head of Paid Service (section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) and is paid £157,845. The salary is a "spot salary" which means that it does not attract incremental pay progression.

The Council has considered the relationship between Chief Executive remuneration and that of other staff. The ratio between the salary of the Chief Executive and the median salary paid is 1:5.56. The ratio of the Chief Executive's salary to the lowest paid employee is 1:7.58.

It is the Council's policy that the FTE salary range for the post of Chief Executive will normally be no greater than 11 x the FTE of a SCP 1 'Green Book' employee. The Council currently meets this requirement.

The Chief Executive also receives a Returning Officer fee in respect of electoral duties. This applies to Parliamentary, County, District and Parish elections, referenda and Police and Crime Commissioner elections. The Council is required to appoint a Returning Officer under Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The fees are always based on the latest Returning Officers Charges Order as set by Parliament and the latest County Council Scale of Fees & Charges. The budgets for fees are provided by Central Government.

### 3.2 Strategic Directors

There are two Strategic Director posts both reporting to the Chief Executive. The annual FTE range for the grade of the Strategic Director is £99,584 - £108,523. There are four incremental points in the grade.

It is the Council's policy that the salary for a Strategic Director is no greater than 7 x the FTE salary of a SCP 1 'Green Book' employee. This is currently being achieved.

### 3.3 Heads of Service and Chief Financial Officer

These post holders report to the Strategic Directors or to the Chief Executive. The annual FTE range for the grade of these posts is £66,841 - £78,132 for the lower banded Head of Service posts, and £80,954 - £91,756 for the higher band.

It is the Council's policy that the salary for these posts will normally be no greater than 6 x the FTE salary of a SCP 1 'Green Book' employee. This is currently being achieved.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also undertakes the statutory role of Monitoring Officer (section 5(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989). Remuneration for these duties is incorporated within the salary.

The Head of Finance also undertakes the statutory role of Chief Finance Officer (section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972). Remuneration for these duties is incorporated within the salary.

3.4 The value of the Chief Officers' salaries quoted above can be increased by the pay awards notified from time to time by the JNC for Chief Officers of Local Authorities. The Pay Claim for 2023/24 has not yet been agreed as of 6 February 2023.

3.5 Performance management is vital to ensure that the Council's agenda is being successfully delivered. For those Officers not at the top of the grade, progression through salary scales is determined by performance. The practice, under the national agreements for Chief Executives and other Chief Officers, which had been to apply

automatic incremental progression generally regardless of performance, is not applied and will continue not to be applied.

#### **4. GENDER PAY GAP**

- 4.1 Since March 2018 the Council is required by law to report annually on their gender pay gap and publish this information. This must include mean and median gender pay gaps; the mean and median gender bonus gaps; the proportion of men and women who received bonuses; and the proportions of male and female employees in each pay quartile. This is also reported to the Corporate Governance Group and has an associated action plan.

#### **5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES APPLYING TO REMUNERATION OF CHIEF OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES**

- 5.1 On recruitment, individuals will be placed on the appropriate SCP within the pay grade for the post that they are appointed to, dependent on knowledge, skills, and if necessary, market forces. Access to appropriate elements of the Council's Relocation Scheme may also be granted in certain cases when new starters need to move to the area.
- 5.2 Individuals will normally receive an annual increment, subject to the top of their grade not being exceeded. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. examination success), individuals may receive accelerated increments. Again, this is subject to the top of their grade not being exceeded.
- 5.3 It is not the Council's policy to award bonuses for any employees, including senior officers.
- 5.4 Employees who are required to travel in order to carry out their duties will be recompensed under the terms of the Council's locally agreed travel policy.
- 5.5 On ceasing to be employed by the Council, individuals will only receive compensation:
- (a) in circumstances that are relevant (e.g. redundancy); and/or
  - (b) that is in accordance with our Policy Statement on how we exercise the various employer discretions provided by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- 5.6 If it is appropriate for an honorarium to be paid this will be in accordance with the Council's Special Payments Policy.
- 5.7 In relation to some specific hard to fill roles a "Golden Hello" may be awarded.
- 5.8 Any subsistence allowance that is paid will normally be no higher than the rates notified from time to time by the East of England Local Government Association.



**6. REVIEW**

The Localism Act requires councils to prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each subsequent financial year. The Policy can be amended during the course of the year for example to incorporate a pay award. However, any changes must comply with this Statement. The next Statement is scheduled to be for 2024/25.

**GLOSSARY**

Pay spine – a scale showing the rates of pay for employees working at each level of the organisation.

Spinal Column Point (SCP) – the incremental steps that make up the pay spine. Each spinal column point has an associated salary value.

Full time equivalent (FTE) – a value assigned to signify the number of full-time employees that could have been employed if the reported number of hours worked by part-time employees had been worked by full-time employees instead.

Job evaluation - a method of determining on a systematic basis the relative importance of a number of different jobs.

**Setting the Council Tax – Background information****ES/1457**

The Localism Act 2011 requires the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year. The precept levels of other precepting bodies have been received and are detailed below:

**Town and Parish Councils**

The Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2023/24 are detailed in Appendix E1 and total £7,094,818.09. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for Town and Parish Councils is 3.59% and results in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £78.53 for 2023/24.

**Suffolk County Council**

Suffolk County Council met on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and set their precept at £135,188,863. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £1,496.43.

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk**

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk presented his proposal to the Police and Crime Panel on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to set the precept at £23,725,332. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £262.62.

**Council Tax Resolutions**

If the formal Council Tax Resolution below is approved, the total Band D Council Tax will be as follows:

	<b>2022/23 £</b>	<b>2023/24 £</b>	<b>Increase %</b>
East Suffolk Council	176.22	181.17	2.81
Suffolk County Council	1,438.92	1,496.43	3.99
Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk	247.68	262.62	6.03
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1862.82</b>	<b>1,940.22</b>	<b>4.15</b>
Town & Parish Councils (average)	75.81	78.53	3.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,938.63</b>	<b>2,018.75</b>	<b>4.13</b>

The Council is recommended to resolve as follows:

1. Council Tax Base

That it be noted that on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022, Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base for 2023/24

  - (a) for the whole Council area as 90,340.92 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
  - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate as in the attached Appendix E1.
2. Council Tax Requirement

That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2023/24 (excluding Town and Parish precepts) is £16,367,064
3. Council Tax Calculations

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act: -

  - (a) £176,407,500

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Town and Parish Councils (*i.e. Gross Expenditure*)
  - (b) £152,945,618

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. (*i.e. Gross Income*)
  - (c) £23,461,882

being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - (d) £259.70

being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Town and Parish precepts). (Average Council Tax).
  - (e) £7,094,818

being the aggregate amount of all special items (Town and Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix F1).
  - (f) £181.17

being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates. (Basic Council Tax)

4. Major Precepting Bodies To note that the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.
5. Aggregate Amounts of Council Tax That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in Appendix E2 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2023/24 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

Valuation Bands							
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**EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL (£)**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
120.78	140.91	161.04	181.17	221.43	261.69	301.95	362.34

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (£)**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
997.62	1,163.89	1,330.16	1,496.43	1,828.97	2,161.51	2,494.05	2,992.86

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR SUFFOLK (£)**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
175.08	204.26	233.44	262.62	320.98	379.34	437.70	525.24

**AGGREGATE OF COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENTS (£)**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1,293.48	1,509.06	1,724.64	1,940.22	2,371.38	2,802.54	3,233.70	3,880.44

6. Excessive Council Tax That the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2023/24 of £181.17 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

**SPECIAL ITEMS - PARISH PRECEPTS AND SPECIAL EXPENSES**

PARISH / AREA	EXPENSE	TAX BASE	EQUIVALENT COUNCIL TAX	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX
	£		£	£
Aldeburgh	215,000.00	1,899.17	113.21	294.38
Alderton	7,000.00	181.06	38.66	219.83
Aldringham-Cum-Thorpe	8,500.00	606.00	14.03	195.20
All Saints & St. Nicholas, St. Michael and St. Peter S E	3,300.00	98.83	33.39	214.56
Badingham	13,000.00	235.76	55.14	236.31
Barnby	8,411.96	214.86	39.15	220.32
Barsham and Shipmeadow	1,363.50	134.31	10.15	191.32
Bawdsey	8,185.00	198.00	41.34	222.51
Beccles	143,830.00	3,346.33	42.98	224.15
Benacre	0.00	32.02	0.00	181.17
Benhall & Sternfield	9,500.00	311.61	30.49	211.66
Blaxhall	5,631.82	112.93	49.87	231.04
Blundeston and Flixton	10,276.67	479.77	21.42	202.59
Blyford and Sotherton	3,250.00	71.90	45.20	226.37
Blythburgh	8,262.00	198.44	41.63	222.80
Boulge	0.00	14.48	0.00	181.17
Boyton	4,120.00	62.44	65.98	247.15
Bramfield & Thorington	7,500.00	197.96	37.89	219.06
Brampton with Stoven	3,115.44	157.53	19.78	200.95
Brandeston	7,715.00	146.98	52.49	233.66
Bredfield	5,573.97	151.22	36.86	218.03
Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis Farm	7,000.00	998.79	7.01	188.18
Bromeswell	5,130.00	153.62	33.39	214.56
Bruisyard	3,400.00	71.81	47.35	228.52
Bucklesham	9,800.00	205.35	47.72	228.89
Bungay	164,000.00	1,668.62	98.28	279.45
Burgh	0.00	78.95	0.00	181.17
Butley, Capel St Andrew & Wantisden	2,948.26	118.69	24.84	206.01
Campsea Ashe	6,000.00	155.80	38.51	219.68
Carlton Colville	57,926.36	2,671.88	21.68	202.85
Charsfield	7,003.00	162.02	43.22	224.39
Chediston, Linstead Magna & Linstead Parva	3,250.00	157.72	20.61	201.78
Chillesford	800.00	75.96	10.53	191.70
Clopton	5,550.00	142.46	38.96	220.13
Cookley & Walpole	10,500.00	153.25	68.52	249.69
Corton	7,575.00	588.59	12.87	194.04
Covehithe	0.00	13.92	0.00	181.17
Cransford	0.00	67.77	0.00	181.17
Cratfield	4,100.00	152.30	26.92	208.09
Cretingham, Hoo & Monewden	2,869.00	208.88	13.74	194.91
Dallinghoo	0.00	82.88	0.00	181.17
Darsham	6,750.00	228.14	29.59	210.76
Debach	0.00	33.38	0.00	181.17
Dennington	10,800.00	239.53	45.09	226.26
Dunwich	2,000.00	85.66	23.35	204.52
Earl Soham	13,287.00	202.51	65.61	246.78
Easton	10,007.61	178.23	56.15	237.32

# Council Tax Resolutions

# APPENDIX E1

PARISH / AREA	EXPENSE	TAX BASE	EQUIVALENT COUNCIL TAX	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX
	£		£	£
Eyke	11,600.00	151.75	76.44	257.61
Felixstowe	621,629.12	8,771.40	70.87	252.04
Flixton, St. Cross S E & St. Margaret South Elmham	1,817.19	167.77	10.83	192.00
Framlingham	180,941.00	1,644.19	110.05	291.22
Friston	8,520.50	208.50	40.87	222.04
Frostenden, Uggheshall and South Cove	2,500.00 * <sup>1</sup>	172.91	14.46	195.63
Gisleham	4,200.00	248.94	16.87	198.04
Great Bealings	7,500.00	133.06	56.37	237.54
Great Glemham	6,345.00	102.19	62.09	243.26
Grundisburgh & Culpho	21,000.10	655.32	32.05	213.22
Hacheston	8,037.73	165.66	48.52	229.69
Halesworth	159,626.00	1,808.83	88.25	269.42
Hasketon	8,895.05	186.36	47.73	228.90
Hemley	0.00	26.41	0.00	181.17
Henstead with Hulver Street	5,000.00	138.11	36.20	217.37
Heveningham	6,209.00	61.42	101.09	282.26
Hollesley	35,596.00	507.88	70.09	251.26
Holton	15,080.00	311.80	48.36	229.53
Homersfield	5,500.00	59.58	92.31	273.48
Huntingfield	6,124.00	79.71	76.83	258.00
Iken	3,420.00	61.93	55.22	236.39
Kelsale-cum-Carlton	22,821.00	413.65	55.17	236.34
Kesgrave	357,300.00	4,826.19	74.03	255.20
Kessingland	151,154.00	1,439.26	105.02	286.19
Kettleburgh	6,000.00	108.33	55.39	236.56
Kirton & Falkenham	24,854.00	557.47	44.58	225.75
Knodishall	19,360.00	311.92	62.07	243.24
Leiston	339,500.00	1,957.72	173.42	354.59
Letheringham	1,200.00 * <sup>2</sup>	42.41	28.30	209.47
Levington & Stratton Hall	9,200.00	125.14	73.52	254.69
Little Bealings	13,000.00	216.46	60.06	241.23
Little Glemham	4,410.00	66.78	66.04	247.21
Lound	3,984.00	127.74	31.19	212.36
Lowestoft	1,975,790.00	12,926.07	152.85	334.02
Marlesford	5,000.00	90.73	55.11	236.28
Martlesham	146,300.00	2,142.72	68.28	249.45
Melton	117,261.00	1,945.62	60.27	241.44
Mettingham	1,489.81	83.98	17.74	198.91
Middleton	8,829.00	209.69	42.11	223.28
Mutford	6,496.04	186.40	34.85	216.02
Nacton	10,960.00	341.61	32.08	213.25
Newbourne	6,750.00	112.65	59.92	241.09
North Cove	2,932.00	149.77	19.58	200.75
Orford & Gedgrave	29,419.00	401.90	73.20	254.37
Otley	5,863.33	327.59	17.90	199.07
Oulton	28,253.00	1,654.14	17.08	198.25
Oulton Broad	257,645.00	3,307.43	77.90	259.07
Parham	6,300.00	131.13	48.04	229.21
Peasenhall	12,217.72	245.78	49.71	230.88

PARISH / AREA	EXPENSE	TAX BASE	EQUIVALENT COUNCIL TAX	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX
	£		£	£
Pettistree	3,812.00	87.12	43.76	224.93
Playford	10,500.00	110.97	94.62	275.79
Ramsholt	0.00	12.22	0.00	181.17
Redisham	0.00	61.82	0.00	181.17
Rendham	2,800.00	127.13	22.02	203.19
Rendlesham	144,522.00	941.76	153.46	334.63
Reydon	28,931.13	1,196.49	24.18	205.35
Ringsfield and Weston	8,400.00	221.74	37.88	219.05
Rumburgh	4,000.00	120.07	33.31	214.48
Rushmere	0.00	34.13	0.00	181.17
Rushmere St Andrew	123,300.00	2,607.03	47.30	228.47
Saxmundham	241,975.14	1,609.94	150.30	331.47
Saxtead	5,700.00	126.45	45.08	226.25
Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough	8,000.00	182.31	43.88	225.05
Shottisham	5,250.00	83.44	62.92	244.09
Sibton	2,250.00	96.50	23.32	204.49
Snape	11,642.00	332.72	34.99	216.16
Somerleyton, Ashby & Herringfleet	3,300.00	163.68	20.16	201.33
Southwold	120,573.00	1,100.22	109.59	290.76
Spexhall	4,500.00	85.54	52.61	233.78
St. Andrew Ilketshall	7,400.00	116.03	63.78	244.95
St. James South Elmham	2,288.00	91.17	25.10	206.27
St. John Ilketshall	0.00	20.25	0.00	181.17
St. Lawrence Ilketshall	0.00	61.83	0.00	181.17
St. Margaret Ilketshall	750.00	70.34	10.66	191.83
Stratford St Andrew and Farnham	4,500.00	140.49	32.03	213.20
Sudbourne	4,600.00	186.37	24.68	205.85
Sutton	3,500.00	150.97	23.18	204.35
Sutton Heath	9,750.00	374.89	26.01	207.18
Sweffling	4,040.65	98.89	40.86	222.03
Swilland & Winesham	15,444.35	427.46	36.13	217.30
Theberton	8,088.52	150.78	53.64	234.81
Trimley St Martin	24,990.00	767.41	32.56	213.73
Trimley St Mary	56,000.00	1,268.02	44.16	225.33
Tuddenham St Martin	6,200.00	159.80	38.80	219.97
Tunstall	10,251.03	256.12	40.02	221.19
Ubbeston	5,193.00	45.10	115.14	296.31
Ufford	22,904.00	406.54	56.34	237.51
Walberswick	20,000.00	375.63	53.24	234.41
Waldringfield	16,322.00	255.28	63.94	245.11
Wangford with Henham	6,500.00	258.05	25.19	206.36
Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet	24,000.00	421.36	56.96	238.13
Westerfield	10,017.44	248.51	40.31	221.48
Westhall	4,009.95	136.42	29.39	210.56
Westleton	13,000.00	308.17	42.18	223.35
Wickham Market	75,456.00	829.10	91.01	272.18
Wissett	4,369.71	127.62	34.24	215.41
Woodbridge	425,088.00	3,389.95	125.40	306.57
Worlingham	39,549.26	1,298.40	30.46	211.63

PARISH / AREA	EXPENSE	TAX BASE	EQUIVALENT COUNCIL TAX	BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX
	£		£	£
Wrentham	18,388.06	379.37	48.47	229.64
Yoxford	14,701.67	357.01	41.18	222.35
Total	<u>7,094,818.09</u>	<u>90,340.92</u>	<u>78.53</u>	<u>259.70</u>

BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX represents the Council Tax payable on a Band D property for District Council purposes. Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk and Suffolk County Council's basic amount will be added to this figure.

\*1 Frostenden, Uggeshall and South Cove precept has been anticipated in accordance with The Billing Authorities (Anticipation of Precepts) Regulations 1992

\*2 Letheringham precept has been anticipated in accordance with The Billing Authorities (Anticipation of Precepts) Regulations 1992



## AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

The Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2023/24 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA	VALUATION BANDS							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Aldeburgh	1,358.99	1,585.49	1,811.99	2,038.49	2,491.49	2,944.49	3,397.48	4,076.98
Alderton	1,309.29	1,527.51	1,745.72	1,963.94	2,400.37	2,836.80	3,273.23	3,927.88
Aldringham-Cum-Thorpe	1,292.87	1,508.35	1,723.83	1,939.31	2,370.27	2,801.23	3,232.18	3,878.62
All Saints & St. Nicholas, St. Michael and St. Peter S E	1,305.78	1,523.41	1,741.04	1,958.67	2,393.93	2,829.19	3,264.45	3,917.34
Badingham	1,320.28	1,540.33	1,760.37	1,980.42	2,420.51	2,860.61	3,300.70	3,960.84
Barnby	1,309.62	1,527.89	1,746.16	1,964.43	2,400.97	2,837.51	3,274.05	3,928.86
Barsham and Shipmeadow	1,290.29	1,505.33	1,720.38	1,935.43	2,365.53	2,795.62	3,225.72	3,870.86
Bawdsey	1,311.08	1,529.59	1,748.11	1,966.62	2,403.65	2,840.67	3,277.70	3,933.24
Beccles	1,312.17	1,530.87	1,749.56	1,968.26	2,405.65	2,843.04	3,280.43	3,936.52
Benacre	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Benhall & Sternfield	1,303.85	1,521.15	1,738.46	1,955.77	2,390.39	2,825.00	3,259.62	3,911.54
Blaxhall	1,316.77	1,536.23	1,755.69	1,975.15	2,414.07	2,852.99	3,291.92	3,950.30
Blundeston and Flixton	1,297.80	1,514.10	1,730.40	1,946.70	2,379.30	2,811.90	3,244.50	3,893.40
Blyford and Sotherton	1,313.65	1,532.60	1,751.54	1,970.48	2,408.36	2,846.25	3,284.13	3,940.96
Blythburgh	1,311.27	1,529.82	1,748.36	1,966.91	2,404.00	2,841.09	3,278.18	3,933.82
Boulge	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Boyton	1,327.51	1,548.76	1,770.01	1,991.26	2,433.76	2,876.26	3,318.77	3,982.52
Bramfield & Thorington	1,308.78	1,526.91	1,745.04	1,963.17	2,399.43	2,835.69	3,271.95	3,926.34
Brampton with Stoven	1,296.71	1,512.82	1,728.94	1,945.06	2,377.30	2,809.53	3,241.77	3,890.12
Brandeston	1,318.51	1,538.27	1,758.02	1,977.77	2,417.27	2,856.78	3,296.28	3,955.54
Bredfield	1,308.09	1,526.11	1,744.12	1,962.14	2,398.17	2,834.20	3,270.23	3,924.28
Brightwell, Foxhall & Purdis Farm	1,288.19	1,502.89	1,717.59	1,932.29	2,361.69	2,791.09	3,220.48	3,864.58
Bromeswell	1,305.78	1,523.41	1,741.04	1,958.67	2,393.93	2,829.19	3,264.45	3,917.34
Bruisyard	1,315.09	1,534.27	1,753.45	1,972.63	2,410.99	2,849.35	3,287.72	3,945.26
Bucklesham	1,315.33	1,534.56	1,753.78	1,973.00	2,411.44	2,849.89	3,288.33	3,946.00
Bungay	1,349.04	1,573.88	1,798.72	2,023.56	2,473.24	2,922.92	3,372.60	4,047.12
Burgh	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Butley, Capel St Andrew & Wantisden	1,300.08	1,516.76	1,733.44	1,950.12	2,383.48	2,816.84	3,250.20	3,900.24
Campsea Ashe	1,309.19	1,527.39	1,745.59	1,963.79	2,400.19	2,836.59	3,272.98	3,927.58
Carlton Colville	1,297.97	1,514.30	1,730.63	1,946.96	2,379.62	2,812.28	3,244.93	3,893.92
Charsfield	1,312.33	1,531.06	1,749.78	1,968.50	2,405.94	2,843.39	3,280.83	3,937.00
Chediston, Linstead Magna & Linstead Parva	1,297.26	1,513.47	1,729.68	1,945.89	2,378.31	2,810.73	3,243.15	3,891.78
Chillesford	1,290.54	1,505.63	1,720.72	1,935.81	2,365.99	2,796.17	3,226.35	3,871.62
Clopton	1,309.49	1,527.74	1,745.99	1,964.24	2,400.74	2,837.24	3,273.73	3,928.48
Cookley & Walpole	1,329.20	1,550.73	1,772.27	1,993.80	2,436.87	2,879.93	3,323.00	3,987.60
Corton	1,292.10	1,507.45	1,722.80	1,938.15	2,368.85	2,799.55	3,230.25	3,876.30
Covehithe	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Cransford	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Cratfield	1,301.47	1,518.38	1,735.29	1,952.20	2,386.02	2,819.84	3,253.67	3,904.40
Crettingham, Hoo & Monewden	1,292.68	1,508.13	1,723.57	1,939.02	2,369.91	2,800.81	3,231.70	3,878.04
Dallinghoo	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Darsham	1,303.25	1,520.45	1,737.66	1,954.87	2,389.29	2,823.70	3,258.12	3,909.74
Debach	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Dennington	1,313.58	1,532.51	1,751.44	1,970.37	2,408.23	2,846.09	3,283.95	3,940.74
Dunwich	1,299.09	1,515.60	1,732.12	1,948.63	2,381.66	2,814.69	3,247.72	3,897.26
Earl Soham	1,327.26	1,548.47	1,769.68	1,990.89	2,433.31	2,875.73	3,318.15	3,981.78
Easton	1,320.95	1,541.11	1,761.27	1,981.43	2,421.75	2,862.07	3,302.38	3,962.86
Eyke	1,334.48	1,556.89	1,779.31	2,001.72	2,446.55	2,891.37	3,336.20	4,003.44
Felixstowe	1,330.77	1,552.56	1,774.36	1,996.15	2,439.74	2,883.33	3,326.92	3,992.30
Flixton, St. Cross S E & St. Margaret South Elmham	1,290.74	1,505.86	1,720.99	1,936.11	2,366.66	2,796.60	3,226.85	3,872.22
Framlingham	1,356.89	1,583.03	1,809.18	2,035.33	2,487.63	2,939.92	3,392.22	4,070.66
Friston	1,310.77	1,529.23	1,747.69	1,966.15	2,403.07	2,839.99	3,276.92	3,932.30
Frostenden, Uggeshall and South Cove	1,293.16	1,508.69	1,724.21	1,939.74	2,370.79	2,801.85	3,232.90	3,879.48
Gisleham	1,294.77	1,510.56	1,726.36	1,942.15	2,373.74	2,805.33	3,236.92	3,884.30
Great Bealings	1,321.10	1,541.28	1,761.47	1,981.65	2,422.02	2,862.38	3,302.75	3,963.30
Great Glemham	1,324.91	1,545.73	1,766.55	1,987.37	2,429.01	2,870.65	3,312.28	3,974.74
Grundisburgh & Culpho	1,304.89	1,522.37	1,739.85	1,957.33	2,392.29	2,827.25	3,262.22	3,914.66

## PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA

## VALUATION BANDS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Hacheston	1,315.87	1,535.18	1,754.49	1,973.80	2,412.42	2,851.04	3,289.67	3,947.60
Halesworth	1,342.35	1,566.08	1,789.80	2,013.53	2,460.98	2,908.43	3,355.88	4,027.06
Hasketon	1,315.34	1,534.56	1,753.79	1,973.01	2,411.46	2,849.90	3,288.35	3,946.02
Hemley	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Henstead with Hulver Street	1,307.65	1,525.60	1,743.54	1,961.48	2,397.36	2,833.25	3,269.13	3,922.96
Heveningham	1,350.91	1,576.07	1,801.22	2,026.37	2,476.67	2,926.98	3,377.28	4,052.74
Hollesley	1,330.25	1,551.95	1,773.66	1,995.37	2,438.79	2,882.20	3,325.62	3,990.74
Holton	1,315.76	1,535.05	1,754.35	1,973.64	2,412.23	2,850.81	3,289.40	3,947.28
Homersfield	1,345.06	1,569.24	1,793.41	2,017.59	2,465.94	2,914.30	3,362.65	4,035.18
Huntingfield	1,334.74	1,557.20	1,779.65	2,002.11	2,447.02	2,891.94	3,336.85	4,004.22
Iken	1,320.33	1,540.39	1,760.44	1,980.50	2,420.61	2,860.72	3,300.83	3,961.00
Kelsale-cum-Carlton	1,320.30	1,540.35	1,760.40	1,980.45	2,420.55	2,860.65	3,300.75	3,960.90
Kesgrave	1,323.87	1,555.02	1,777.16	1,999.31	2,443.60	2,887.89	3,332.18	3,998.62
Kessingland	1,353.53	1,579.12	1,804.71	2,030.30	2,481.48	2,932.66	3,383.83	4,060.60
Kettleburgh	1,320.45	1,540.52	1,760.60	1,980.67	2,420.82	2,860.97	3,301.12	3,961.34
Kirton & Falkenham	1,313.24	1,532.11	1,750.99	1,969.86	2,407.61	2,845.35	3,283.10	3,939.72
Knodishall	1,324.90	1,545.72	1,766.53	1,987.35	2,428.98	2,870.62	3,312.25	3,974.70
Leiston	1,399.13	1,632.32	1,865.51	2,098.70	2,565.08	3,031.46	3,497.83	4,197.40
Letheringham	1,302.39	1,519.45	1,736.52	1,953.58	2,387.71	2,821.84	3,255.97	3,907.16
Levington & Stratton Hall	1,332.53	1,554.62	1,776.71	1,998.80	2,442.98	2,887.16	3,331.33	3,997.60
Little Bealings	1,323.56	1,544.15	1,764.75	1,985.34	2,426.53	2,867.71	3,308.90	3,970.68
Little Glemham	1,327.55	1,548.80	1,770.06	1,991.32	2,433.84	2,876.35	3,318.87	3,982.64
Lound	1,304.31	1,521.70	1,739.08	1,956.47	2,391.24	2,826.01	3,260.78	3,912.94
Lowestoft	1,385.42	1,616.32	1,847.23	2,078.13	2,539.94	3,001.74	3,463.55	4,156.26
Marlesford	1,320.26	1,540.30	1,760.35	1,980.39	2,420.48	2,860.56	3,300.65	3,960.78
Martlesham	1,329.04	1,550.55	1,772.05	1,993.56	2,436.57	2,879.59	3,322.60	3,987.12
Melton	1,323.70	1,544.32	1,764.93	1,985.55	2,426.78	2,868.02	3,309.25	3,971.10
Mettingham	1,295.35	1,511.24	1,727.13	1,943.02	2,374.80	2,806.58	3,238.37	3,886.04
Middleton	1,311.59	1,530.19	1,748.79	1,967.39	2,404.59	2,841.79	3,278.98	3,934.78
Mutford	1,306.75	1,524.55	1,742.34	1,960.13	2,395.71	2,831.30	3,266.88	3,920.26
Nacton	1,304.91	1,522.39	1,739.88	1,957.36	2,392.33	2,827.30	3,262.27	3,914.72
Newbourne	1,323.47	1,544.04	1,764.62	1,985.20	2,426.36	2,867.51	3,308.67	3,970.40
North Cove	1,296.57	1,512.67	1,728.76	1,944.86	2,377.05	2,809.24	3,241.43	3,889.72
Orford & Gedgrave	1,332.32	1,554.37	1,776.43	1,998.48	2,442.59	2,886.69	3,330.80	3,996.96
Otley	1,295.45	1,511.36	1,727.27	1,943.18	2,375.00	2,806.82	3,238.63	3,886.36
Oulton	1,294.91	1,510.72	1,726.54	1,942.36	2,374.00	2,805.63	3,237.27	3,884.72
Oulton Broad	1,335.45	1,558.03	1,780.60	2,003.18	2,448.33	2,893.48	3,338.63	4,006.36
Parham	1,315.55	1,534.80	1,754.06	1,973.32	2,411.84	2,850.35	3,288.87	3,946.64
Peasenhall	1,316.66	1,536.10	1,755.55	1,974.99	2,413.88	2,852.76	3,291.65	3,949.98
Pettistree	1,312.69	1,531.48	1,750.26	1,969.04	2,406.60	2,844.17	3,281.73	3,938.08
Playford	1,346.60	1,571.03	1,795.47	2,019.90	2,468.77	2,917.63	3,366.50	4,039.80
Ramsholt	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Redisham	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Rendham	1,298.20	1,514.57	1,730.93	1,947.30	2,380.03	2,812.77	3,245.50	3,894.60
Rendlesham	1,385.83	1,616.80	1,847.77	2,078.74	2,540.68	3,002.62	3,464.57	4,157.48
Reydon	1,299.64	1,516.25	1,732.85	1,949.46	2,382.67	2,815.89	3,249.10	3,898.92
Ringsfield and Weston	1,308.77	1,526.90	1,745.03	1,963.16	2,399.42	2,835.68	3,271.93	3,926.32
Rumburgh	1,305.73	1,523.35	1,740.97	1,958.59	2,393.83	2,829.07	3,264.32	3,917.18
Rushmere	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
Rushmere St Andrew	1,315.05	1,534.23	1,753.40	1,972.58	2,410.93	2,849.28	3,287.63	3,945.16
Saxmundham	1,383.72	1,614.34	1,844.96	2,075.58	2,536.82	2,998.06	3,459.30	4,151.16
Saxtead	1,313.57	1,532.50	1,751.43	1,970.36	2,408.22	2,846.08	3,283.93	3,940.72
Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough	1,312.77	1,531.57	1,750.36	1,969.16	2,406.75	2,844.34	3,281.93	3,938.32
Shottisham	1,325.47	1,546.38	1,767.29	1,988.20	2,430.02	2,871.84	3,313.67	3,976.40
Sibton	1,299.07	1,515.58	1,732.09	1,948.60	2,381.62	2,814.64	3,247.67	3,897.20
Snape	1,306.85	1,524.65	1,742.46	1,960.27	2,395.89	2,831.50	3,267.12	3,920.54
Somerleyton, Ashby & Herringfleet	1,296.96	1,513.12	1,729.28	1,945.44	2,377.76	2,810.08	3,242.40	3,890.88
Southwold	1,356.58	1,582.68	1,808.77	2,034.87	2,487.06	2,939.26	3,391.45	4,069.74
Spexhall	1,318.59	1,538.36	1,758.12	1,977.89	2,417.42	2,856.95	3,296.48	3,955.78
St. Andrew Ilketshall	1,326.04	1,547.05	1,768.05	1,989.06	2,431.07	2,873.09	3,315.10	3,978.12
St. James South Elmham	1,300.25	1,516.96	1,733.67	1,950.38	2,383.80	2,817.22	3,250.63	3,900.76
St. John Ilketshall	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56
St. Lawrence Ilketshall	1,283.52	1,497.44	1,711.36	1,925.28	2,353.12	2,780.96	3,208.80	3,850.56

## PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA

## VALUATION BANDS

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
St. Margaret Ilketshall	1,290.63	1,505.73	1,720.84	1,935.94	2,366.15	2,796.36	3,226.57	3,871.88
Stratford St Andrew and Farnham	1,304.87	1,522.35	1,739.83	1,957.31	2,392.27	2,827.23	3,262.18	3,914.62
Sudbourne	1,299.97	1,516.64	1,733.30	1,949.96	2,383.28	2,816.61	3,249.93	3,899.92
Sutton	1,298.97	1,515.47	1,731.96	1,948.46	2,381.45	2,814.44	3,247.43	3,896.92
Sutton Heath	1,300.86	1,517.67	1,734.48	1,951.29	2,384.91	2,818.53	3,252.15	3,902.58
Sweffling	1,310.76	1,529.22	1,747.68	1,966.14	2,403.06	2,839.98	3,276.90	3,932.28
Swilland & Winesham	1,307.61	1,525.54	1,743.48	1,961.41	2,397.28	2,833.15	3,269.02	3,922.82
Theberton	1,319.28	1,539.16	1,759.04	1,978.92	2,418.68	2,858.44	3,298.20	3,957.84
Trimley St Martin	1,305.23	1,522.76	1,740.30	1,957.84	2,392.92	2,827.99	3,263.07	3,915.68
Trimley St Mary	1,312.96	1,531.79	1,750.61	1,969.44	2,407.09	2,844.75	3,282.40	3,938.88
Tuddenham St Martin	1,309.39	1,527.62	1,745.85	1,964.08	2,400.54	2,837.00	3,273.47	3,928.16
Tunstall	1,310.20	1,528.57	1,746.93	1,965.30	2,402.03	2,838.77	3,275.50	3,930.60
Ubbeston	1,360.28	1,586.99	1,813.71	2,040.42	2,493.85	2,947.27	3,400.70	4,080.84
Ufford	1,321.08	1,541.26	1,761.44	1,981.62	2,421.98	2,862.34	3,302.70	3,963.24
Walberswick	1,319.01	1,538.85	1,758.68	1,978.52	2,418.19	2,857.86	3,297.53	3,957.04
Waldringfield	1,326.15	1,547.17	1,768.20	1,989.22	2,431.27	2,873.32	3,315.37	3,978.44
Wangford with Henham	1,300.31	1,517.03	1,733.75	1,950.47	2,383.91	2,817.35	3,250.78	3,900.94
Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet	1,321.49	1,541.74	1,761.99	1,982.24	2,422.74	2,863.24	3,303.73	3,964.48
Westerfield	1,310.39	1,528.79	1,747.19	1,965.59	2,402.39	2,839.19	3,275.98	3,931.18
Westhall	1,303.11	1,520.30	1,737.48	1,954.67	2,389.04	2,823.41	3,257.78	3,909.34
Westleton	1,311.64	1,530.25	1,748.85	1,967.46	2,404.67	2,841.89	3,279.10	3,934.92
Wickham Market	1,344.19	1,568.23	1,792.26	2,016.29	2,464.35	2,912.42	3,360.48	4,032.58
Wissett	1,306.35	1,524.07	1,741.80	1,959.52	2,394.97	2,830.42	3,265.87	3,919.04
Woodbridge	1,367.12	1,594.97	1,822.83	2,050.68	2,506.39	2,962.09	3,417.80	4,101.36
Worlingham	1,303.83	1,521.13	1,738.44	1,955.74	2,390.35	2,824.96	3,259.57	3,911.48
Wrentham	1,315.83	1,535.14	1,754.44	1,973.75	2,412.36	2,850.97	3,289.58	3,947.50
Yoxford	1,310.97	1,529.47	1,747.96	1,966.46	2,403.45	2,840.44	3,277.43	3,932.92

## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## Residents survey: Finance Questions only

### Contents (click the header to go to that page)

- Demographics of the survey respondents *(page 2)*
- The type of the survey respondents *(page 3)*
- Which ONE from the options below would you choose to help us close the budget gap? *(page 4)*
- From the following broad themes which should we spend money on? *(page 5)*
- We have pledged to become Carbon Neutral by 2030. Do you support additional spending to achieve this pledge? *(page 6)*
- To help fund crucial services, what level of increase of Council Tax would you consider to be fair? *(page 6)*
- Do you agree with the principle of us investing in land and buildings in the district to generate income for the council? *(page 6)*
- Do you agree with the principle of us transferring viable land and buildings to local communities to use for their own local benefit? *(page 6)*



## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## Demographics of survey respondents

Date survey completed

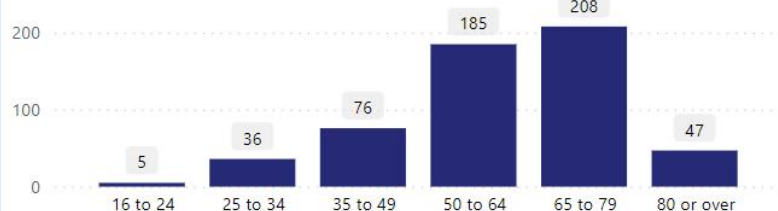
01/01/2022

28/12/2022

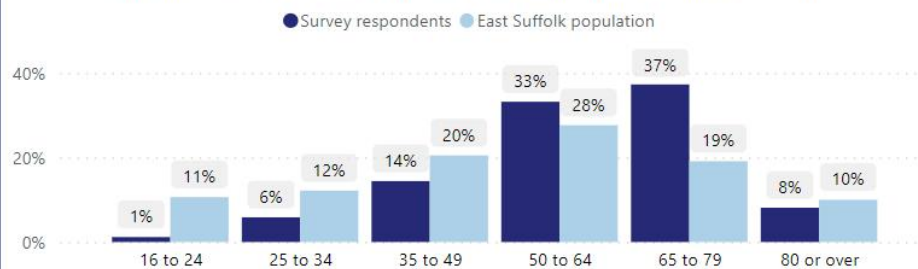
565

Count of respondents

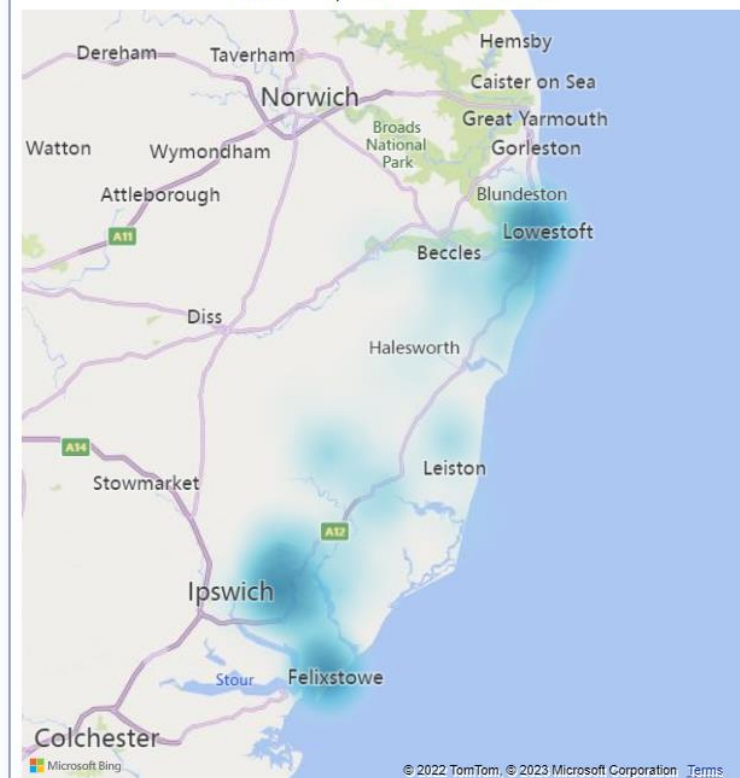
Age of the respondents



Comparing the age of the respondents with the population of East Suffolk



Where respondents come from



## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

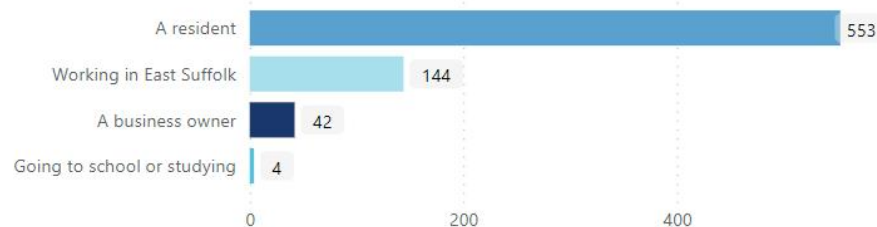
## Type of people who responded

01/01/2022 28/12/2022

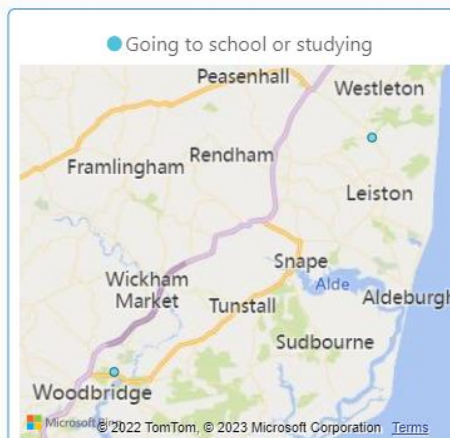
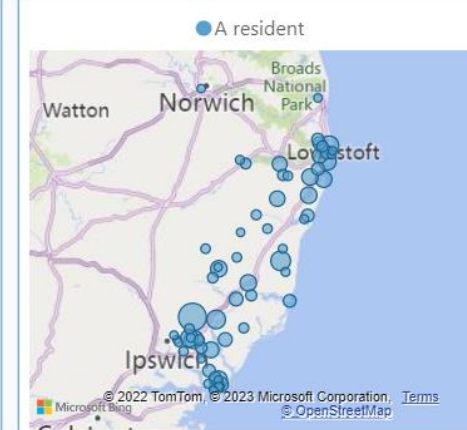
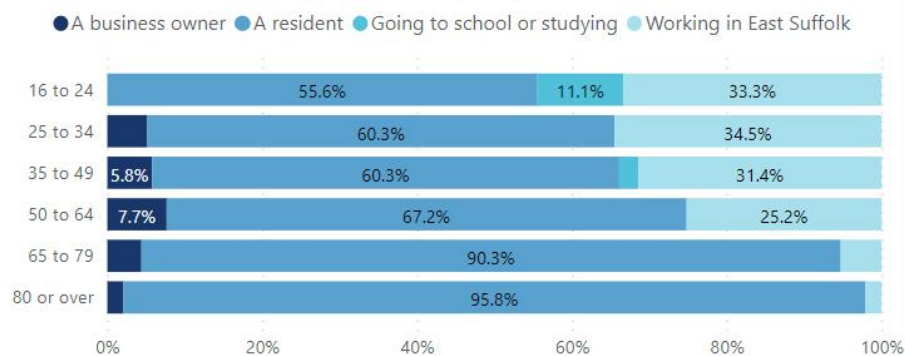
Type of respondent

All

Type of survey respondent



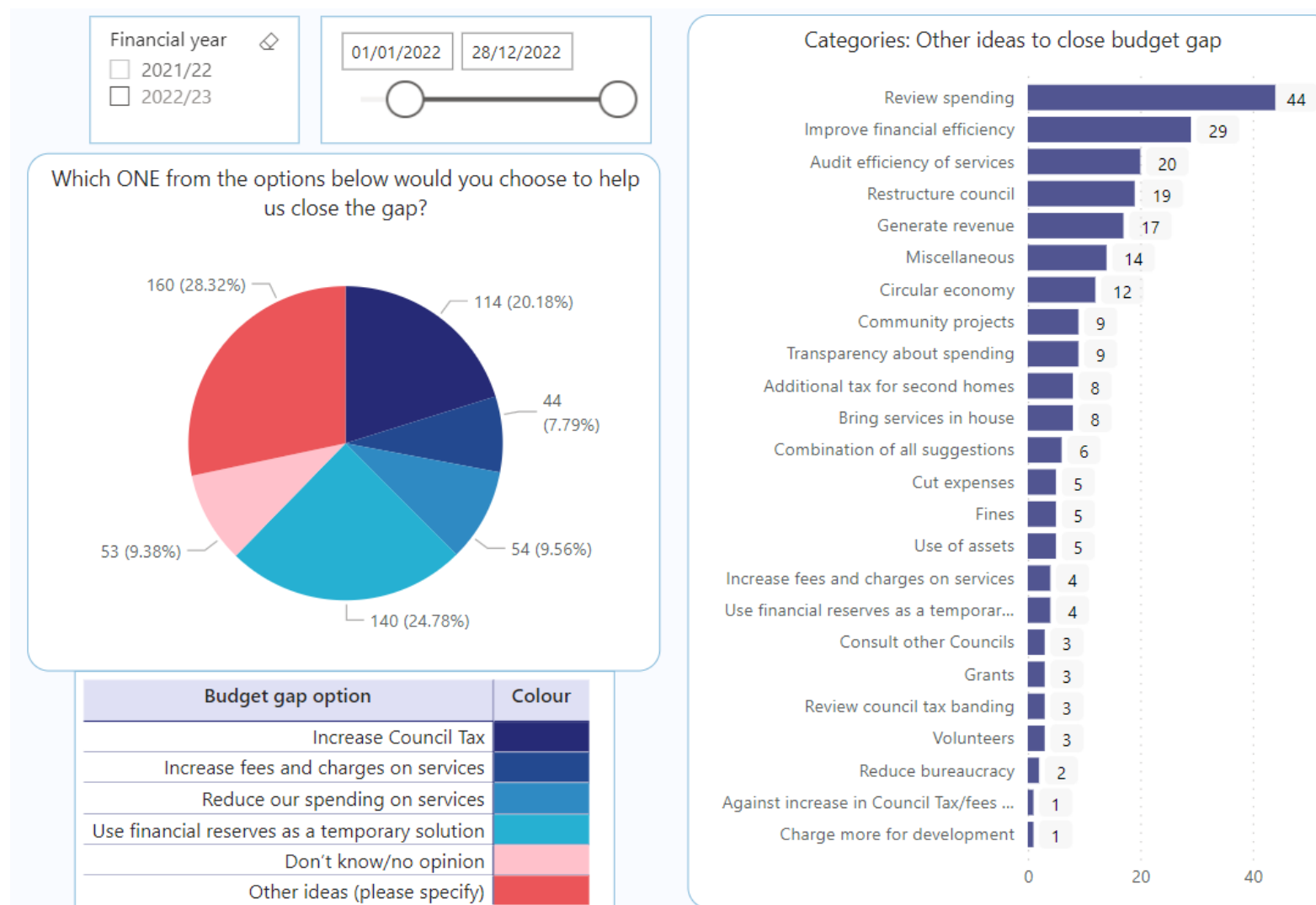
Type of survey respondent





## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## Which ONE from the options below would you choose to help us close the gap?



## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## What should the Council spend their money on?

Financial year

☐ 2021/22☐ 2022/23

01/01/2022

28/12/2022



From the following broad themes which should we spend money on? (Please rank your answers - 1 being the most important and 4 the least)

Priority	1	2	3	4	Total
Caring for our environment	180	155	116	78	529
Delivering digital transformation	27	45	96	343	511
Growing and supporting our economy	170	131	149	61	511
Supporting and enabling our communities	146	184	144	40	514
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>2065</b>

From the following broad themes which should we spend money on? (Please rank your answers - 1 being the most important and 4 the least) (Percentage of column total)

Priority	1	2	3	4
Caring for our environment	34.4%	30.1%	23.0%	14.9%
Delivering digital transformation	5.2%	8.7%	19.0%	65.7%
Growing and supporting our economy	32.5%	25.4%	29.5%	11.7%
Supporting and enabling our communities	27.9%	35.7%	28.5%	7.7%

Age group	Priority	1	2	3	4
16 to 24	Caring for our environment	60.0%	20.0%	20.0%	
	Delivering digital transformation			20.0%	80.0%
	Growing and supporting our economy	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%
	Supporting and enabling our communities	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	
25 to 34	Caring for our environment	22.2%	38.9%	27.8%	11.1%
	Delivering digital transformation	2.9%	5.7%	14.3%	77.1%
	Growing and supporting our economy	31.4%	28.6%	37.1%	2.9%
	Supporting and enabling our communities	42.9%	25.7%	22.9%	8.6%
35 to 49	Caring for our environment	31.5%	32.9%	24.7%	11.0%
	Delivering digital transformation	8.1%	6.8%	17.6%	67.6%
	Growing and supporting our economy	36.1%	29.2%	26.4%	8.3%
	Supporting and enabling our communities	26.8%	29.6%	31.0%	12.7%
50 to 64	Caring for our environment	34.1%	24.0%	24.0%	17.9%
	Delivering digital transformation	3.4%	12.0%	19.4%	65.1%
	Growing and supporting our economy	37.1%	24.6%	28.0%	10.3%
	Supporting and enabling our communities	25.3%	39.3%	27.5%	7.9%
65 to 79	Caring for our environment	34.9%	30.2%	19.8%	15.1%
	Delivering digital transformation	6.1%	7.3%	19.6%	67.0%
	Growing and supporting our economy	30.2%	25.8%	29.1%	14.8%
	Supporting and enabling our communities	28.8%	36.4%	27.7%	7.1%
80 or over	Caring for our environment	42.5%	35.0%	12.5%	10.0%
	Delivering digital transformation	7.9%	7.9%	21.1%	63.2%
	Growing and supporting our economy	22.2%	19.4%	36.1%	22.2%
	Supporting and enabling our communities	33.3%	36.1%	27.8%	2.8%



## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## How residents think East Suffolk should operate

Financial year

All

01/01/2022

28/12/2022

Carbon neutral by 2030

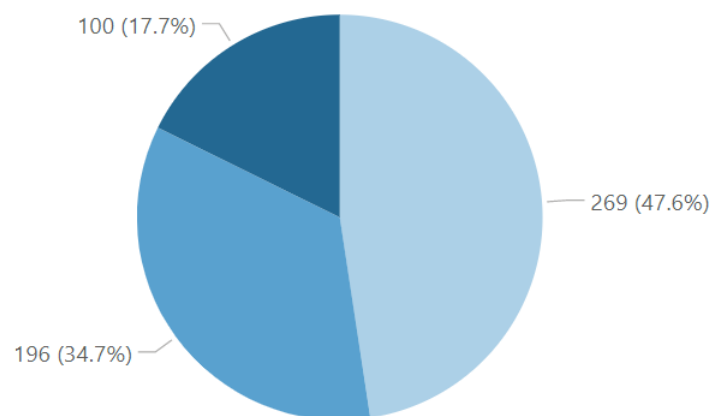
Increase in Council Tax

Invest in land and buildings

Transfer land and buildings to local communities

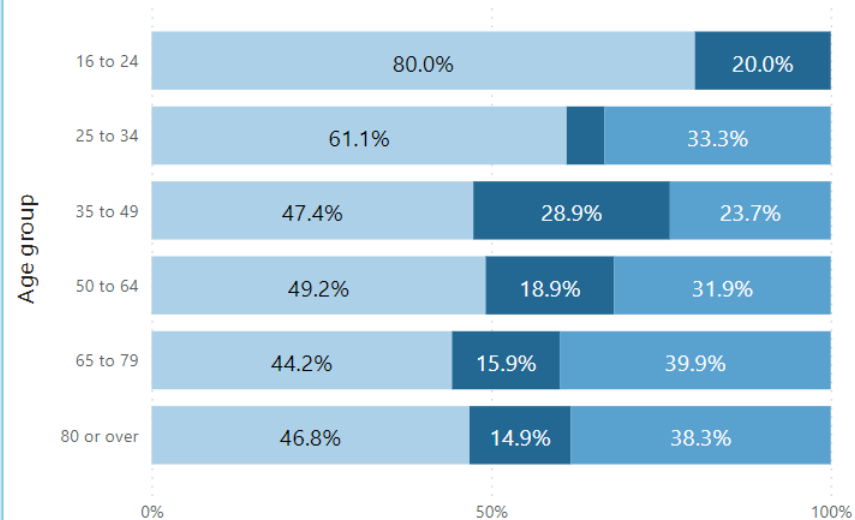
We have pledged to become Carbon Neutral by 2030. Do you support additional spending to achieve this pledge?

● Yes ● No ● Not sure



We have pledged to become Carbon Neutral by 2030. Do you support additional spending to achieve this pledge?

● Yes ● Not sure ● No



## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## How residents think East Suffolk should operate

Financial year

All

01/01/2022

28/12/2022

Carbon neutral by 2030

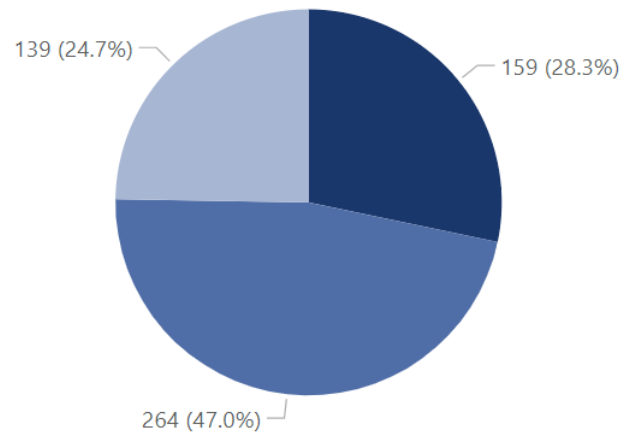
Increase in Council Tax

Invest in land and buildings

Transfer land and buildings to local communities

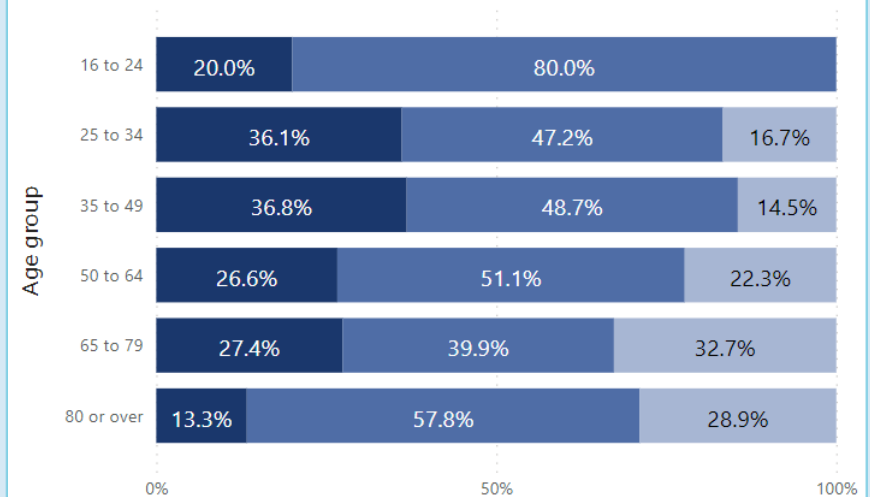
We are allowed to increase our portion of Council Tax by just under 3% without requiring a referendum. To help fund crucial services, what level of increase would you consider to be fair?

● Less than 3% ● 3% ● More than 3%



We are allowed to increase our portion of Council Tax by just under 3% without requiring a referendum. To help fund crucial services, what level of increase would you consider to be fair?

● Less than 3% ● 3% ● More than 3%



## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## How residents think East Suffolk should operate

Financial year

All

01/01/2022

28/12/2022

Carbon neutral by 2030

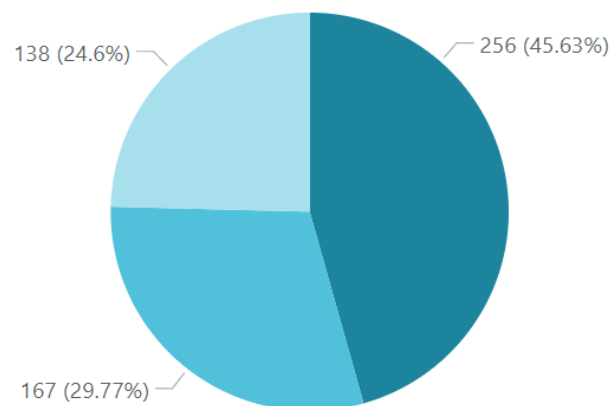
Increase in Council Tax

Invest in land and buildings

Transfer land and buildings to local communities

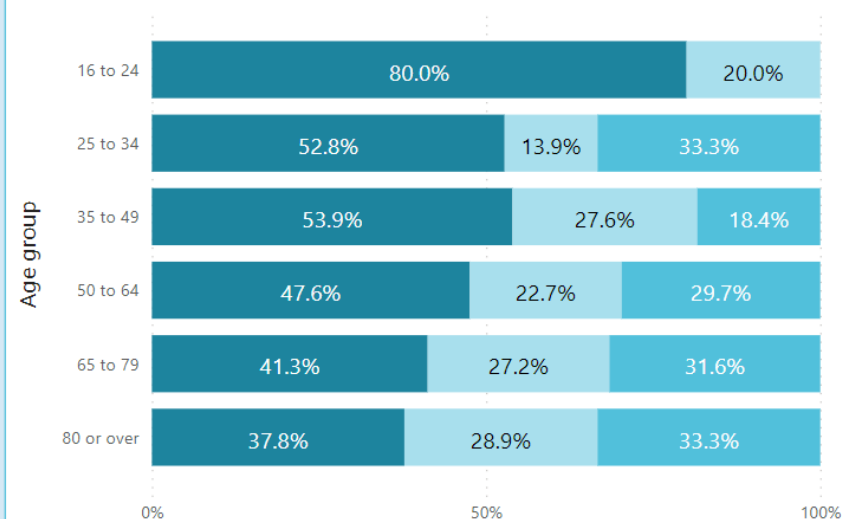
Do you agree with the principle of us investing in land and buildings in the district to generate income for the council?

● Yes ● No ● Not sure



Do you agree with the principle of us investing in land and buildings in the district to generate income for the council?

● Yes ● Not sure ● No



## RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS 2022

## How residents think East Suffolk should operate

Financial year

All

01/01/2022

28/12/2022

Carbon neutral by 2030

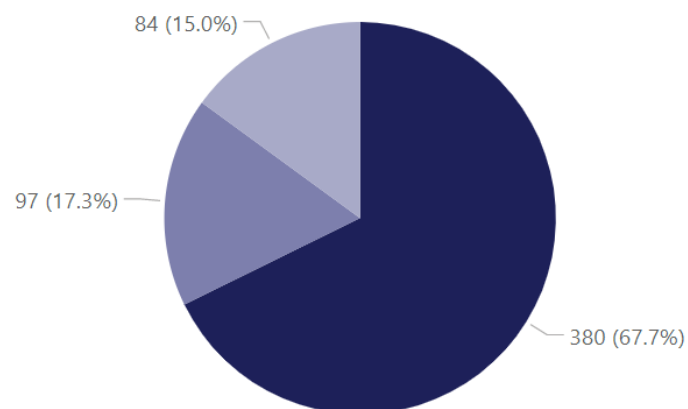
Increase in Council Tax

Invest in land and buildings

Transfer land and buildings to local communities

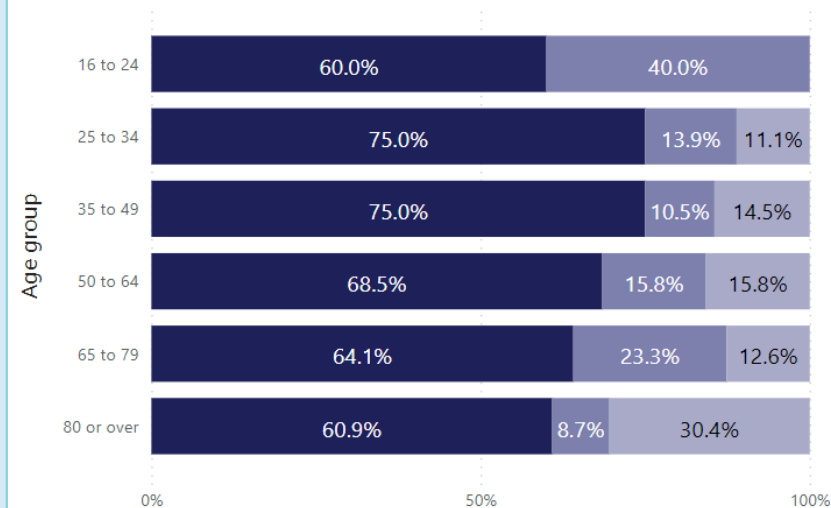
Do you agree with the principle of us transferring viable land and buildings to local communities for them to run, use and maintain for their own local benefit?

● Yes ● Not sure ● No



Do you agree with the principle of us transferring viable land and buildings to local communities for them to run, use and maintain for their own local benefit?

● Yes ● Not sure ● No



## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PRE-MEETING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED

### Questions Received from the Scrutiny Committee ahead of the meeting on 19 January 2023

Please note – page, section and figures referred to in the questions below relate to the report presented to Cabinet on 3 January 2023.

#### General Fund Budget Report

1. **How has the council tax freeze in 2021/22 affected our available revenue under the government referendum limit for next year?**

Not increasing Council Tax in one year does mean a reduction to the baseline income for each year going forward. This is in the region of £0.400m per annum.

2. **P146 why does the forecast MTFS budget gap increase to over £5m in 24/25 when business rate bonus is expected to last until 25/26?**

Excluding £1.3m use of the In-Year Savings Reserve to balance the 2023/24 budget, the unfunded gap increases by £3.3m (2022/23 £1.3m to £4.6m in 2024/25). This can be explained by the following key items:

Minimum Revenue Provision increases by £1m  
Operations inflationary cost pressures increasing by £1m (see response to Q7 below)  
Support Recharges charged to Port Health decreased by £0.300m  
Pay awards and assumptions additional cost of £0.400m  
Interest Receivable income down by £0.300m  
Other net changes £0.300m  
**Total £3.3m**

3. **P147 Why are we using the business Rate Equalisation Reserve to balance our budget when we know we are going to get a £5m pa hit in two years time? Are we cleaning out the In Year Savings reserve in the next two years as well? Is it a good time to exhaust our reserves against such risks?**

The update of the MTFS presented to the Scrutiny Committee includes £2.25m use of the In-Year Savings Reserve to balance the budget for the current year and 2024/25. This would leave approximately £1.2m in this reserve from April 2024, which could be used to fund future budget gaps.

The Business Rate Equalisation Reserve is a risk based reserve which can assist with balancing the budget. No use of this reserve has been built into the current MTFS for addressing budget shortfalls. It is referred to in the report as a possible source of

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PRE-MEETING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED**

funding a budget gap in 2024/25, currently projected at £4.5m to £5m. The uncommitted balance on the Business Rate Equalisation Reserve is currently £15m.

Use of other earmarked reserves is funding service delivery of Council projects and initiatives.

- 4. P157 – I am confused. What is the latest on the annual increases in RSG and RSDG?  
See qu 11**

The 2023/24 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement released on 19 December detailed the following for RSG and RSDG:

**RSG**

Methodology for RSG has not changed, and for 2023/24 RSG will increase at 10.1%. There will continue to be no adjustment for “negative RSG”. Family Annex Council Tax Discount Grant and LCTS Administration Subsidy grant have been rolled into RSG in 2023/24. The 2023/24 Provisional RSG is calculated as follows:

RSG 2022/23 £339,500

Plus:

10.1% increase £34,400

LCTS Administration Subsidy £267,600

Family Annex Council Tax Discount Grant £61,300

**= Provision RSG 2023/24 £702,800**

**RSDG**

The provisional settlement presents a roll forward of this grant, and therefore remaining at £260,300. This is a slight decrease of £5,200 on the original budget assumption for 2023/24.

- 5. P161 – why did we not raise council tax by the maximum 3% allowed, especially if we are exhausting risk reserves?**

Cabinet Member for Resource will address this question at the Scrutiny meeting.

- 6. 5.6 p165 – are service budgets frozen in cash terms? – ie cut by 10% in real terms?  
5.9 “ an increasingly more challenging strategy.”**

Key areas of expenditure impacted by inflation have been increased across the MTFs period. This includes insurance premiums, utility costs, fuel and pay. This also

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PRE-MEETING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED

captures the Council's Operations services currently delivered via the Norse Partnership. In total the Council's budgets have been increase by nearly £12m across the MTFS period for inflation.

- 7. P186 App A4 – How are you going to reduce current year agency/contractor costs of £535k to £100k next year and subsequent years? Operation services cost doubles to almost £2m over next two years due to fuel and pay inflation?**

### Agency/Contractor Costs

The figures referred to in the question of £0.535m (actual £0.636m) and £0.10m represent the change to the budget in the current year and next year respective. The actual revised budget proposed for 2022/23 is £0.700m and £.200m in 2023/24. The budget has been updated on the assumption that the need for contractors to address recruitment challenges will be reduced. However, there is an acknowledgement that this may not be what actually transpires and next year's budget may show a variance again in this area, with a compensating saving on the permanent establishment budget.

### Operations Services Cost - £2m per annum increase from 2024/25

Due to the 2022/23 National pay award and local pay agreements, this has increased the staffing budget of the Operation Services delivered under the Operations Partnership by £1.4m including assumptions on pay for 2023/24. Fuel inflation has been assumed to continue at around £0.300m, plus a further £0.300m for waste disposal costs, which are forecast to increase from 2023/24.

As outlined in Section 5.24 of Appendix A, it should be noted that the current MTFS does not take into consideration any financial implications associated with the contract with Norse coming to an end in July 2023, and therefore the efficiencies expected to be delivered with East Suffolk Services Ltd. The budget estimates for 2024/25 and beyond are currently based on the existing arrangements, together with the additional external cost pressures on the Operations service – primarily rising fuel costs and national and local pay settlements. These are challenges that the Council and Norse would have to address, regardless of the set-up of East Suffolk Services Ltd from July 2023.

- 8. P188 App a5 -How achievable is it to halve the economic regeneration service area budget from this year to next in cash terms?**

The Economic Development budget for 2022/23 does include some one-off project related spend which is funded from reserves, primarily grants held in reserves for the specific project. This does give the appearance of a significant decrease in the budget

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PRE-MEETING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED

for this service area between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The £2m difference between years is not due to a reduction in the available budget for Economic Regeneration but is due to the following higher levels of spend on projects in 2022/23:

- £1m Coastal Communities Grant Funding to support the Southwold Enterprise Hub.
- £0.300m Heritage Action Zone North project
- £0.600m Lowestoft Full Fibre project (funded from HNB)

The corresponding reserve entries are captured in the movement on reserves line of the budget.

9. **P188 – according to dec 22 budgets we will reduce our service expenditure from a present net cost of £47.7m to £41.1m next year – won't that hurt?**

The reduction on net cost of service budgets is not due to a reduction of budget available to the delivery of services. There will be variations between years due to project spend and services areas that are in receipt of higher levels of funding from reserves. The service areas most subject to such budget changes between years includes Economic Development and Regeneration, Operations, Communities and Housing.

10. **P204 – this must be the latest on govt funding– RSG up 10% but RSDG frozen? Does the net FGA grant of £1.2m guarantee mean that we get a 3% increase in spending power to deal with 10% inflation?**

Please see the response to Question 4 regarding the latest on Government funding for RSG and RSDG.

The new funding guarantee is in recognition of inflationary pressures and ensures that all Councils see at least a 3% increase in their Core Spending Power (CSP). The change in the balance of council tax and government grant increases within the settlement affects the distribution of CSP increases at local authority level. Shire districts have the smallest average increase in CSP (only 5.0%). This illustrates that Band D increases are lower for districts (2.99% or £5). Districts have gained from the 3% Funding Guarantee, which has boosted districts' government funding. The increase in Core Spending for East Suffolk Council based on the Provisional Settlement for 2023/24 is 4.7%.



Agenda Item 9

**Extract from Unconfirmed Minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023**  
**Item 7 - Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24 ES/1457**

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Thursday, 19 January 2023 at 6.30pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Mick Richardson

**Officers present:** Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Ben Bix (Democratic Services Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Isobel Rolfe (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Julian Sturman (Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management), Heather Tucker (Head of Housing), Amber Welham (Finance Business Partner – Housing), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

**7 Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24**

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, Councillor Cook introduced report **ES/1421** which provided an update on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as presented to Cabinet on 3 January and presented an initial draft of the Council's General Fund Budget for 2023/24. The MTFS provided a baseline forecast of income and expenditure in the context of the overall financial climate, including public finances and the local government financial environment.

Councillor Cook reported a change to the 2023/24 budget due to an update in Government funding following the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December. Due to the new Funding Guarantee Allocation the Government funding to East Suffolk Council would increase by £1.1m next year. The budget gaps for the current year and next year had consequently changed since the report to Cabinet on 3 January:

- The 2022/23 budget gap had changed from £0.786m to £0.904m, an increase of £0.118m. The change was due to the ongoing review of the budget updates processed
- The 2023/24 budget gap had changed from £2.629m to £1.347m, a decrease of £1.282m. The change was due to the new Funding Guarantee Allocation along with further review of the updated budgets.

**Extract from Unconfirmed Minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023**  
**Item 7 - Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24**

The proposal to use the In-Year Savings Reserve to fund those gaps remained appropriate, and a balanced budget continued to be presented in the report for both years. Councillor Cook explained that the 2023/24 referendum limit for Council Tax had been increased from 2% to 3%, but the £5 threshold for Shire Districts in two-tier areas remained the same. The report therefore proposed a Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk of £181.17 for 2023/24, an increase of £4.95 or 2.81%.

Reserves were projected at around £29m by the end of the MTFS, but that did not include the use of reserves beyond 2023/24 to fund future projected budget gaps. In addition to the exhaustion of the Covid-19 reserve, there were other reserves that were forecast to be fully or substantially utilised over the plan period, and not be replenished. Those reserves included: the In-Year Savings reserve, the New Homes Bonus reserve, the Transformation reserve, the Capital reserve and the Port Health reserve.

Councillor Cook drew the Committee's attention to prospective activities not yet factored into the MTFS, which had the potential to ease the budget gap toward the end of the MTFS period. Those activities included the Council Tax Premium on second homes and expected efficiencies from East Suffolk Services Ltd. However, despite those factors, and the uncertainty due to local government finance reforms, the range and scale of expenditure and income pressures indicated that a combination of actions would be needed to ensure a longer-term sustainable position including a phased use of reserves, maximisation of income, and the achievement of significant levels of savings.

Councillor Lynch referenced page 71 of the report and asked whether the 100% premium on second homes was the maximum premium and queried the criteria by which the Council would determine whether a property was a second home, and whether owners could avoid the premium. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council already knew which homes were second homes in the district, a heat-map visualisation was available, and a full report would be made to Full Council on 25 January. There were mechanisms in place to prevent the premium being avoided, including tightening of the criteria under which a second home could be registered for business rates rather than council tax. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that 100% was the maximum premium and that further detail would be set out in the forthcoming report to Full Council.

Councillor Goldson sought three clarifications:

1. The type of properties that had been or would be transferred by the Council
2. In what circumstances would the Council invest in land
3. Whether the ambition of carbon neutrality was achievable

In response to Councillor Goldson, the Strategic Director, Chief Finance Officer and the Cabinet Member responded accordingly:

**Extract from Unconfirmed Minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023**  
**Item 7 - Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24**

1. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Council's land and property holdings were continually reviewed and that there were circumstances where disposal of the asset was the most appropriate business decision. Additionally, there was an ongoing community asset transfer programme to Parish and Town Councils.
2. The Council had invested in land for economic development including the Enterprise Hubs and the PowerPark. The Council had previously decided to constrain its land investments to land within the district and would continue to bring forward opportunities to invest where suitable property had been identified. Investment in suitable housing land would be made in accordance with the Housing Strategy.
3. The Strategic Director was confident that the forthcoming decarbonisation report to Cabinet would set out how the Council would achieve around a 70% reduction in Carbon emissions in future years and offset the remaining 30%.

In response to further questions from Councillors Gooch, Topping and Lynch, the Cabinet Member and Officers explained that:

- The feedback from residents' surveys were used to inform the existing and future Council priorities
- Due to inflationary cost increases, there had been an increase in the green waste subscription charge and the quantity of green waste collected had not yet returned to pre-Covid-19 levels
- There had been a reduction in parking income and a district-wide review of parking was underway which would establish options for Cabinet to consider
- A reserve with annual contributions had been built up for the forthcoming election, however the means of funding new Voter Authority Certificate Identification requirements would be reported back to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee as a Matter Arising
- The introduction of the second homes premium would not countermand extant long term empty homes premiums of up to 300%.

Councillor Beavan referred to the response to his advance question regarding agency costs and queried the rationale for the reduction to the budget and questioned where agency staff had been or would be replaced with salaried staff, whether that had been captured with an increase in salary budgets elsewhere. The Deputy Chief Finance Officer responded that some agency roles were highly specialised consultancy roles that were utilised for specific matters and would not then become salaried roles in the future. The reduction shown in the budget was in anticipation of more general agency roles no longer being required as the roles had been absorbed within budgeted establishment costs. The Chief Finance Officer further clarified that the budget was subject to flux and it was desirable to budget appropriately according to business need.

Councillor Gooch sought clarification of how earmarked reserves were set out in the report and considered that it would be clearer to delineate between those reserves that were earmarked for statutory services and those that were earmarked for discretionary projects. The Deputy Chief Finance Officer further described the

**Extract from Unconfirmed Minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023**  
**Item 7 - Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24**

categorisation of reserves as shown in Appendix A7. This is to assist with identifying reserve balances that are not earmarked for specific purposes and assured Members that reserves not ringfenced for specific purposes are challenged if they have not been used for some time.

The Chairman noted that the Cabinet had chosen to increase housing rents by 6% rather than the 7% ceiling set by the Government and queried whether a full analysis of the consequence on the level of Council Tax of not increasing rents by the ceiling amount had been undertaken. The Cabinet Member countered that there was a cost-of-living crisis and that the Cabinet had made the decision not to levy the maximum rent increase to its most vulnerable residents. Similarly, Cabinet had for the same reason, and having received a greater than anticipated Government settlement, chosen to increase Council Tax by less than the referendum threshold of 3%. The Cabinet was cognisant of the volatile financial landscape and inflation, and it would not have been prudent to not increase Council Tax in those circumstances.

The Chairman called upon Members to debate the recommendations. There being no debate, the Chairman moved the recommendations duly seconded by Councillor Coulam, a vote was taken and it was by a majority

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Cabinet**

1. To approve the 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget as set out in the report and summarised in Appendix A5 and notes the budget forecast for 2024/25 and beyond;
2. To approve the reserves and balances movements as presented in Appendix A7; and
3. To approve a proposed Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £181.17 for 2023/24, an increase of £4.95 or 2.81%.

**FULL COUNCIL**

**Wednesday, 22 February 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2023/24 to 2026/27
<b>Report by</b>	Maurice Cook, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources Richard Kerry, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Brian Mew Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer <a href="mailto:Brian.mew@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">Brian.mew@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>  Amber Welham Finance Business Partner – Housing <a href="mailto:Amber.welham@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">Amber.welham@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
-------------------------------	------

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

This report requires Full Councils approval for the proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget, including the revised position for 2022/23 as required under the Budget and Policy Framework.

The report details how rents and service charges are determined, and the proposed increases/decreases for 2023/24 are set out for approval.

The report also notes changes in welfare and benefits and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, which have been considered when completing the budgets, and rents and service charges for 2023/24.

### **Options:**

#### **HRA Budget Setting**

The Housing Revenue Account Budget forms part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. The Council is required to set an annual budget and therefore no other options have been considered for this.

#### **Rent Setting**

Under normal circumstances, following four years of compulsory rent reduction, setting rents from 2020/21 below the maximum permitted under the Rent Standard is not recommended for the following reasons:

- 1) Under self-financing, the debt settlement figure that the Council can afford is based on a valuation of the Council's housing stock. This valuation is based on assumptions about income and need to spend over 30 years and that the Council will follow the Government's social rent policy. Therefore, the main disadvantage of setting rents lower than that permitted by the Rent Standard is the loss of revenue over the 30 years of the HRA business plan, the ability to service the debt and the adverse impact this will have on investment in the Council's existing housing stock and the delivery of the housing development programme as currently planned. There is an expectation from Government for the social housing sector to make the best use of their resources to provide the homes needed.
- 2) The HRA has the option to borrow additional funds for future projects, as the borrowing cap has been removed, but the affordability of taking any additional borrowing would need to be assessed. At this time there is no requirement for additional borrowing, but this situation could change if rental income streams are not maintained to the level included in the budget, or there are additional costs relating to compliance, decarbonisation, or the housing development programme. In addition to this, the Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The CFR is expected to increase by £77.48 million between 2022/23 and 2026/27 which is due to capital projects potentially being financed through borrowing. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the CFR. The Council expects to comply with this in the medium term, but the scale of the capital programme as currently drafted is such that the Council would begin to approach its borrowing limits over the life of the proposed programme if other sources of finance were not available, although the programme as presented does not pre-empt the realisation of capital receipts.

However, due to the unexpected high levels of inflation during 2022/23, for rent setting of 2023/24 only, there is a small opportunity to increase rents slightly below the government guidance.

**Recommendation/s:**

That Full Council approves the following:

1. The draft HRA budget for 2023/24, and the indicative figures for 2024/25 to 2026/27;
2. Movements in HRA Reserves and Balances;
3. Proposed rent increase of up to 6%. 1% less than the Government 7% rent Cap for 2023/24 rent setting.
4. Service charges and associated fees for 2023/24;
5. Rent and Service Charges to be charged over a 50-week period unless being used for Temporary Accommodation when a 52-week period will be applied.
6. A report be made to the Environment Task Group within 12 months setting out a detailed programme to deliver HRA Housing Stock retrofitting projects.

To note the following:

7. Revised outturn position for 2022/23;
8. Changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare to be noted;
9. Effects of the cost-of-living crisis to the HRA to be noted.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

As set out in the Council's Finance Procedure Rules, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for preparing and submitting reports on revenue budget forecasts to Cabinet and Council. The 2023/24 budget has been considered at the following Council meetings:

- Cabinet 3 January 2023
- Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023
- Cabinet 7 February 2023
- Full Council 22 February 2023

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

The HRA budget directly supports the Council's aim of maintaining financial sustainability. With balanced budgets, and the ability to pay off its current debt, it demonstrates its ability to be financially self-sufficient.

The following policies and strategies apply to the proposals of this report.

- East Suffolk Strategic Plan
- East Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy
- East Suffolk HRA Business Plan 2018-2048
- East Suffolk Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Policy
- Annual Governance Statement
- Financial Management Code

### Environmental:

Consideration has been given in the budget to progressing the Council's wider ambition to become a carbon neutral organisation. Budgets are included within the HRA's capital programme for 2 pilot schemes for retrofitting existing housing stock during 2023/24 and 2024/25, with a further £2 million set aside from 2025/26 onwards for additional schemes in the future.

New intelligent energy software has been implemented which will help develop improvement strategies and specific programmes for work, to reduce energy cost (SAP) or improve carbon reduction (CO2) to meet targets set by East Suffolk Council (ESC) and the Government.

The current average EPC rating for the housing stock is C. A stock condition survey will be carried out which will help with planned programmes of work to target energy efficiency within the stock.

In addition to this, a new build design guide is being worked on to ensure all new properties will meet a standard that helps address the climate emergency by providing more sustainable housing on a site-by-site basis.

Following this report being reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 an additional recommendation has been added to the report at their request (Recommendation 6). This recommendation is as follows: *'A Report be made to the Environment Task Group within 12 months setting out a detailed programme to deliver HRA Housing Stock retrofitting projects'*.

### Equalities and Diversity:

An Equality impact assessment has been completed for setting the HRA budgets and proposed rent setting for 2023/24, EQIA471131609.

There is potential for a negative impact on low-income households if rents are increased. However, every measure has been put in place to support these tenants if this should happen. Affordable rents are capped at the LHA rate which is the most a tenant can receive for the housing element of benefits. This should mean the rents are affordable to all.

### Financial:

A summary analysis of the budget movement is shown in **Table A**. This table is supported by **Appendix A1**, that gives a full breakdown of all budget changes between 2022/23 and 2026/27, with a brief explanation to the changes.

**Table A**

HRA MTFS Updates	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Additional Cost	1,294	1,526	1,564	1,477	2,457
Additional Income	-194	-243	-628	-787	-1,365
Reduced Income	1,256	559	553	545	525
Saving	-5,493	-615	-1,244	-1,584	-177
Use of Reserves	-256	-38	-40	-500	-500
<b>Net Movement Each Year</b>	<b>(3,393)</b>	<b>1,189</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>(849)</b>	<b>940</b>
<b>Net Movement over the period 2022/23 to 2026/27</b>					<b>(1,908)</b>

The full HRA budget and relevant information can be seen in **Appendix A2**.



**Human Resources:**

The budget has been increased to cover staffing requirements of the HRA, with 8.75 new permanent posts being added in 2023/24. These posts will help to meet the growing demands of all service areas, including housing compliance, estates, temporary accommodation, and choice based letting.

All new permanent posts were approved as part of the Housing Team Restructure report taken to Cabinet on 6 December 2022.

In addition to these posts, there are 2 fixed term posts added to the budget.

- A Post Graduate Project Officer within the digital and data transformation team for 1 year, which is corporately funded.
- A Financial Inclusion Officer on a 2-year fixed term contract to help support tenants through the cost-of-living crisis as well as the rent refund process, funded from the Hardship/DHP top up reserve.

The HRA also has 7 apprentice posts included in the 2023-24 budget contributing towards the East Suffolk Apprenticeship Strategy 2018-22.

Further changes to the staffing budgets are a result of the following:

- 2022-23 national pay award agreed.
- The announcement from the Chancellor that the temporary 1.25% increase on national insurance would be removed from November 2022.
- The reduction on employer's pension contribution from 32% to 25% for 3 years from 2023-24.

**ICT:**

No impacts directly arising from this report.

**Legal:**

No impact directly arising from this report.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reflects the statutory requirement under Section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to account separately for local authority housing provision. It is a ring-fenced account, containing solely the costs arising from the provision and management of the Council's housing stock, offset by tenant rents, service charges and other income. The Council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced HRA budget.

From 1 April 2020 the Government set out a new policy statement for rents on social housing (the Policy Statement). This was implemented through the Regulator for Social Housing rather than through legislation. The Government published a 'Direction to the Regulator' to set a Rent Standard, and the Regulator is required to have regard to this when setting its Rent Standard. For the first time, the Government has directed the Regulator to apply its Rent Standard to all registered providers, including local authorities.

**Risk:**

No impact directly arising from this report.

The HRA self-financing regime transferred the financial risk to the Council. The HRA manages this risk through prudent budgeting, careful financial management and adoption of a rolling 30-year financial business plan. The financial sustainability of the budget is managed by ensuring adequate funds are set aside to repay the debt and appropriate levels of working balances are available for any unforeseen costs. It also gives the HRA the opportunities to meet its business objectives whilst creating efficiencies and savings, giving added value for money.

The HRA budgets 2023/24 to 2026/27 (including the revised 2022/23 position) have been updated in the 30-year financial business plan, it shows the current requirements are financially sustainable if the proposed income levels are approved, and no further borrowing will be required at this point.

<p><b>External Consultees:</b></p>	<p>Tenants will be informed in writing of any changes to their rent and service charges one month before they take effect as normal. Tenants will have the opportunity to speak to their rent officer or the HRA's financial inclusion officer if they have any concerns.</p> <p>The Government ran a consultation for the period 31 August 2022 to 12 October 2022 for all Social Housing providers (Housing Associations and stock holding Local Authorities) on the proposal of the rent cap for 2023/24 rent setting.</p>
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education, and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b></p> <p>Under the Self-Financing regime, the future resources and spend of the HRA are based on local decisions. The budget includes financing the capital programme and reserve balances as per the HRA financial business plan. Currently there is no requirement for any additional borrowing, demonstrating financial sustainability and supporting how ESC governs itself.</p>			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
	<b>Self-Financing Arrangement</b>
1.1	The HRA self-financing regime was introduced in April 2012. The Council had to take on a significant amount of debt (£68 million) in exchange for not paying future housing subsidy. This change is beneficial to the HRA over the long-term.
1.2	A 30-year financial business model is used to support the delivery of the HRA under the self-financing regime. It makes assumptions regarding the level of income available and the key risks facing housing service delivery within this timeframe. It programmes in the years the Council expects to pay back the current borrowing, whilst delivering the required service.
1.3	The HRA funds the costs of borrowing for the initial debt settlement. The Council has chosen to incorporate this debt into the Council's overall borrowing portfolio, creating a single pool and charging interest to the HRA in proportion to the debt it holds.
1.4	Originally the HRA had a 'borrowing cap' of £87.26 million imposed on it by Central Government, however this was removed in 2018 when Central Government issued a determination revoking the limit of indebtedness on the HRA. However, the HRA's borrowing capacity is still restricted to the operational boundary for external debt for the whole Council. The boundary is set at £153 million, which includes both the General Fund (GF) and the HRA. Therefore, consideration must be given to the Council's total borrowing and the requirements for borrowing by the GF, before considering increasing the current borrowing of the HRA.
1.5	<p>As of 1 April 2022, the total debt of the HRA was £60.4 million (£58 million from the self-financing settlement and £2.4 million pre-self-financing). In March 2022, £10.77 million was repaid.</p> <p>During the budget period 2023/24 to 2026/27 a further £960,000 is due to be repaid in 2024/25 and £10 million in 2026/27. Both amounts have already been set aside in the debt repayment reserve and the major repairs reserve.</p> <p>Interest on all current HRA borrowing is fixed therefore the HRA will see a reduction in interest payments in the subsequent years of repayment.</p>

	The HRA spending plans, including its capital investment programme, are fully funded from existing resources. Therefore, there is currently no need to make use of any additional borrowing.
1.6	<p><b>Welfare Reform</b></p> <p><b>Universal Credit (UC)</b> was first introduced 10 years ago as part of 'The Welfare Reform Act 2012'. It is a single payment for working aged people who are looking for work or are on a low-income. It replaces housing benefit, working tax credit, child tax credit, income support, income-based jobseekers' allowance and income related employment and support allowance. It was rolled out in the district in 2015.</p>
1.7	New claimants of UC have an initial wait time of five weeks before receiving their first payment, however if they are already receiving housing benefits, this will continue for the first two weeks of the claim process, reducing pressure on tenants.
1.8	<p>The benefit cap has always been £20,000 per annum (outside of Greater London), since the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. However, Government have announced that the cap will be raised by 10.1% for the first time in its history. From April 2023 the new cap will be £22,020 per annum, giving claimants a much-needed boost during a cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>If new claimants' previous income was higher than the benefit cap, they are given a 'grace period' of nine months, easing the transition for the claimant.</p>
1.9	<b>Under-Occupation Charge</b> (also referred to as the 'Bedroom tax') is a fixed cut to housing benefit or the housing element of UC received based on the number of spare bedrooms in the property. The charge only applies to working aged tenants and is set by Central Government. The cut is 14% for one spare room, or 25% for two or more spare rooms.
1.10	To help alleviate the pressure of this penalty, the Council's HRA offers the incentive called 'Cash-for-Moving'. This is a widely used scheme across Councils to encourage tenants to downsize. Tenants can bid for a smaller property on Gateway to Home-Choice, and if successful the tenant could receive up to £2,000 depending on the number of bedrooms given up. The scheme was in place before welfare reform to encourage better use of the housing stock.
1.11	<b>The Right to Buy (RTB) Scheme</b> allows tenants to purchase their Council house at a discounted rate. The maximum discount available is 70% or £87,200 (outside of Greater London) whichever is lower. This value is set by Central Government and increases each year in line with inflation.
1.12	In 2012, the Council entered into an agreement with the Secretary of state to retain a share of its RTB receipts to reinvest in the provision of new affordable homes. As of April 2021, the conditions of this agreement were updated by Central Government. The receipts can now fund up to 40% of investment in new affordable housing (previously only 30%) and they can now contribute to the delivery of shared ownership properties, which they could not before.
1.13	On average the HRA loses approximately 30 properties a year through RTB, and this is the assumption used within the 30-year business plan. However, numbers reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, but started to recover in 2021/22 with 27 sold during the year. For 2022/23, at the end of December 2022, 21 properties have been sold through RTB.

1.14	The implication of RTB sales is a reduction in dwelling rents received. The annual income lost through RTB is on average £140,000 per annum (year on year), adding to the importance of increasing the HRA housing stock. RTB sales are considered when setting the dwelling income budget.
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## 2 Current position

	<b>Dwelling Rents and Service Charges</b>
2.1	<b>The 2020 Rent Standard</b> is the policy statement for rents on social housing and has been in effect from 1 April 2020. It is the first-time Government have directed the Regulator of Social Housing to apply its Rent Standard to all social housing providers, including local authorities.
2.2	From 1 April 2020, all Registered Provider rents (including Local Authorities) must be charged in accordance with the Government Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing. This document was initially issued in 2018 and has subsequently been updated. The latest version is the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), "Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing", February 2019. The Rent Standard, published by the Regulator of Social Housing in 2020 requires Rents to be set in line with this policy statement for the setting of rent.
2.3	The new rent policy permits the Council to increase its rents for at least five years to 2024/25 by up to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of the September of the previous year plus 1%. The Rent Standard also provides freedom to apply a lower increase or to freeze or reduce the rent if a registered housing provider chooses to do so.
2.4	Due to rising inflation, CPI hit 10.1% in September 2022, which would result in social housing landlords having the ability to increase rents by up to 11.1% (10.1% CPI + 1%). However, Government has announced this will be capped at 7% for 2023/24.
2.5	The new rent policy aims to strike a balance between the interests of existing social housing tenants who pay some or all their own rent, the need to build more homes, and the importance of ensuring that providers of social housing have sufficient income to manage and maintain their housing stock.
2.6	Following the four years of rent reduction, the new rent policy was welcomed. A five-year rent deal provides some stability to the Council in terms of its rental income stream, enabling the Council to plan for its housing development programme and decarbonisation of its housing stock.
2.7	<b>Rent Setting</b> is different dependent on the type of rent set. There are two types of rents used within the HRA. Social Rent and Affordable Rent.
2.8	<b>Social Rent</b> is described as all low-cost rental accommodation. Since 2001 social rents have been set based on a formula set by Government. This new policy follows a similar process with the formula and rent setting guidance, set out in the Policy Statement. Annual updates to the formula calculations are published in November of the previous year.
2.9	Under the Rent Policy the initial rent may be set at a level no higher than formula rent, subject to rent flexibility. The formula rent takes account of relative property values, relative local earnings, and a bedroom factor, i.e. smaller properties should have lower rents. The formula rent is also subject to a rent cap. The rent cap applies a maximum ceiling on the formula rent. Therefore, if the formula rent

	is higher than the rent cap for a particular property, the rent cap must be used instead. The rent caps will increase each year by CPI (September of the previous year) plus 1.5%.
2.10	The Government's Rent Policy recognises that registered housing providers should have some flexibility over the rent set for individual properties, to take account of local factors. As a result, the Policy Statement contains flexibility to set rents at up to 5% above the formula rent (10% for supported housing). However, it must be demonstrated that there is clear rationale for doing so, such as the demand for new housing developments, redevelopment, and decarbonisation of stock.
2.11	The Government's Rent Policy states any social rents that exceed the flexibility level must not be increased by more than CPI (rather than CPI plus 1%) each year, until the rent is brought within the rent flexibility level. Also, the property must be re-let at the formula rent value. If this arises when setting the HRA rents, the rent will be frozen or potentially reduced until it reaches the formula rent value. Such situations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
2.12	<b>Affordable Rent</b> values were introduced in 2011 and must not exceed 80% of gross market rent (inclusive of service charges), i.e. rent for which the accommodation might reasonably be expected to be let in the private rented sector. The size, location and service provision must be taken into consideration.
2.13	Affordable rent is exempt from the social rent requirements of the Policy Statement. The Government expects new build properties to be let at affordable rent values. Affordable rent allows the Council to set rents at a level that are typically higher than social rents. The intention behind this flexibility is to enable local authorities to generate additional capacity for investment in new affordable homes. The Council is applying affordable rents to new build or purchased properties and can do so as it has an agreement in place with the Secretary of State. The agreement allows the Council to retain RTB receipts for investment in new affordable rented homes.
2.14	The private rented market can fluctuate from month to month. Therefore, the Council charges the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for all affordable rents (inclusive of service charges). The LHA rate is less than 80% of market rent, but more than social rents. The LHA rate is the most a tenant can receive in benefits towards their rent, therefore anything charged over this value would need to be financed by the tenant's own resources, which could cause financial hardship and potential arrears.
2.15	An additional benefit to this approach ensures a consistent and fair approach to all tenants.
2.16	Affordable rents must not increase by more than CPI (September of the previous year) plus 1%. As with social rent setting, this is a ceiling and a lower increase, or to freeze or reduce affordable rents is permitted.
2.17	<b>Full Market Rent</b> can be charged by a social landlord from April 2015, where a social tenant has an annual household income of at least £60,000. This change allowed landlords to make better use of their social housing for properties rented to households with relatively high incomes. However, the HRA does not currently charge any tenants full market rent as very few tenants are in this position, and the cost to identify these tenants outweighs the benefit of the additional income.
2.18	<b>Shared Ownership Rent</b> is calculated at 2.75% of the share still owned by ESC. This is a nationwide calculation for the initial rent charged. Future year increases will follow the 2020 Rent Standard of the previous year's September CPI + 1%.



2.19	<p><b>The Rent Period</b> the Council works on is a 50-week period. The 52-week rent value is converted to the slightly higher 50-week value, allowing tenants to have two 'rent free weeks' over the Christmas period. This helps tenants at an expensive time of year, and for those in arrears, can help them 'catch up'.</p> <p>A small number of HRA properties are used as temporary accommodation. These properties are charged at the 52-week value as they will not be in the property for more than a year, and therefore would not benefit from the rent-free weeks.</p>
2.20	<p><b>Garage Rents</b> do not follow the same restrictions as dwelling rents. These are based on market research in the district and have been considered for approval by Cabinet as part of the 2023/24 Fees and Charges Report.</p>
2.21	<p><b>Service Charges</b> are those charges payable by tenants to reflect additional services which may not be provided to every tenant, or which may be connected with communal facilities, e.g. Communal facilities in sheltered accommodation (Grouped Homes).</p>
2.22	<p>Councils can review their service charges annually. Service charges should be sufficient to cover the cost of providing the service and are not governed by the same factors as rents. Therefore, not all service charges will necessarily increase each year, they will replicate the cost of the service provided. As set out in the Policy Statement, increases for service charges should be managed, where possible, within the limit on rent changes of CPI plus 1%. Exceptions to this include new charges or where services have been extended.</p>
	<p><b>Arrears</b></p>
2.23	<p>2021/22 had a slight increase on arrears from 2020/21 of just £6,369.87. As at 31.03.22 arrears were 5.79% of total rents and charges raised. This was a 0.08% increase from the previous year and 0.93% (cumulative) from the year before, demonstrating arrear levels are stabilising for the first time since 2015/16 when UC was introduced.</p>
2.24	<p>In February 2021, the tenant's portal went live, allowing tenants to have 24-hour digital access to their rent account. Currently, approximately 15% of tenants are using this function. Further work is to be completed to enable the text messaging service, which is anticipated to go live early 2023, which will enable texting for automated balances or request contact from their Rent Officer. It will also offer paperless direct debits.</p>
2.25	<p>Predictive analytics software was implemented 2018/19 for current tenant arrears. This has been successful in reducing the number of cases rent officers look at each week, allowing them to get through their case load and contact the tenants whose accounts require action. Due to the success of the software, the former tenant model was introduced in 2019/20.</p>
2.26	<p>To reduce the risk of arrears, new tenants are asked to pay rent in advance. The amount they pay is linked to how regularly they pay their rent e.g. if a tenant pays weekly, they will be required to pay one week in advance. As of 01 January 2023, the HRA holds £842,458.29 in rent in advance.</p>
2.27	<p>The current arrears position as of the 01 January 2023 is approximately £1.2 million, an increase of £100,000 on the 2021/22 closing position, which will need to be monitored closely, and additional support provided to affected tenants.</p>

2.28	A rents and service charge audit being completed during 2022/23 which has highlighted errors to some tenants' rents and service charges. Corrections will be applied to tenant rent accounts which will have a positive impact on the current arrears position, as arrears will be required to be cleared before refunds can be processed.
2.29	<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b> The HRA repairs and maintenance (R & M) programme is split between capital and revenue. Revenue costs are to be funded from the revenue income derived from rents, whilst capital will be funded from the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR).
2.30	The HRA is currently undertaking a programme of essential safety inspections, primarily relating to fire safety and essential works identified during inspections. A report detailing the required works was approved at Cabinet on 4 October 2022 and increases of £2 million to the HRA capital programme budget have since been made in the 2022/23 budget to cover these works.
2.31	Material supplies have increased considerably, some timbers have seen an increase of 50%. Due to these high fluctuations in material prices, suppliers are now looking for more flexibility within their contracts. Budgets have been increased to incorporate these increases in cost.
2.32	<b>Capital programme</b> The HRA capital programme forms part of the Council's 'Capital Programme Report 2023/24 to 2026/27'. The HRA capital programme consists of capital budgets for housing repairs, project development such as decarbonisation and the housing development programme.
2.33	The HRA capital programme will be funded via the rental income it retains, the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR), Right-to-Buy (RTB) receipts, external funding and capital receipts held. Funding of the repairs and maintenance aspect of the capital programme is through the MRR. The 2023/24 HRA capital programme is partly funded by Direct Revenue Financing, which totals £3.4 million. This represents £365,000 towards housing projects and redevelopment and £3.035 million on the housing development programme. This is an increase on 2022/23 as it includes carry forwards from reprofiled developments.
2.34	On 31 March 2022, the Council's housing stock totalled 4,451 units. Between 31 March 2022 and 31 December 2022 there have been 21 RTB sales. There have also been 8 new properties added to the housing stock in Darsham, of which 4 are shared ownership and are all occupied. This gives a net decrease to the housing stock of 13 as of 31 December 2022. It is expected a further 5 recently purchased RTB buy-backs will be renovated and back in use by the end of this financial year, reducing the net movement to a decrease of 8.
2.35	In addition to delivering new homes, 2 retrofit projects for existing housing stock have been included in the HRA capital programme. 17 units to be delivered in 2023/24 and 19 units in 2024/25.
2.36	<b>Special Services</b> are made up of revenue costs for Sheltered Schemes, Warden Services, redevelopment/decarbonisation, and the new build programme. As the redevelopment and new build programmes pick up pace, the associated revenue costs also increase. These costs include architect fees, consultant's fees, and staffing.



### 3 How to address current situation

#### Rents and service charges

##### Rent Setting

- 3.1 In accordance with the Rent Standard for 2020, rent increases for 2023/24 would have been increased by the September 2022 CPI plus 1%. September CPI was 10.1%, which would have resulted in a rent increase of up to 11.1%.
- 3.2 However, as part of the autumn statement, Government have imposed a cap on social housing rent increases for 2023/24 of 7%. Government understands the need to protect our residents during a cost-of-living crisis but also the pressures social housing providers face with investing in their existing stock and providing much needed new affordable homes.
- 3.3 Although rents can be increased by up to 7%, social housing providers have the freedom to apply a lower increase or to freeze or reduce the rent if they choose to do so.
- 3.4 Official guidance was released by Government on 14 December 2022. The rent cap is to protect existing tenants only. The formula rent (a nationwide calculation) will still increase by the September CPI plus 1%. The Council has no option on this, and it will affect new tenancies only.
- 3.5 ESC has a commitment to providing all tenants with a home at a decent home's standard, as well as investing in its existing housing stock to meet the Council's aim of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, while building much needed new homes for those waiting on the housing register.
- 3.6 The balance between service provision and protecting current tenants have been carefully considered, and as a result of that, a rent increase of up to 6% for 2023/24 is proposed in this report.
- 3.7 Not all tenants will see a rent increase of the full 6% proposed due to social rents being capped at the formula rent value plus flexibility allowance and affordable rents being capped at the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate (inclusive of service charges). The Government has confirmed the LHA rate will be frozen for a third year. Therefore, tenants on an affordable rent already charged the LHA rate will see no increase in their rents. This has contributed to the average increase being less than 6%.
- 3.8 Shared Ownership tenants are not protected by the Government's 7% rent cap, however Councils are invited to apply a voluntary rent cap for these tenants. ESC will be applying the voluntary rent cap, and the proposed 6% rent increase will be applied to these tenants also.
- 3.9 As part of a rents and service charge audit taking place at ESC during 2022/23, some tenants will see their rents decrease as corrections are processed on their rent accounts. A separate Report 'Housing Regulation' was approved at Full Council on 25 January 2023 with the background and full details of this audit. As part of this report, it was approved that ESC will make use of the rent flexibility available to social housing landlords (see paragraph 2.10). No tenant will have to pay more than they currently pay with the introduction of using the rent flexibility and it will not impact on rent increases for 2023/24 being capped at 6% for ESC tenants.

3.10	Rent setting takes place during February each year to ensure the most up to date rents are used as a base and reduces the chance of manual updates relating to properties re-let between February and March (before the new rent values apply).						
3.11	<p>Applying a 6% rent increase in 2023/24, gives an average rent increase of £3.89 per week. In <b>Table B</b> below, the average rent value for 2022/23 takes into consideration anticipated corrections to rent accounts, and both take into consideration the utilisation of rent flexibility.</p> <p><b>Table B</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2022/23 Average Rent (52 Week Value)</td><td>£92.39</td></tr> <tr> <td>2023/24 Average Rent (52 Week Value)</td><td>£96.28</td></tr> <tr> <td>Average Weekly Rent increase (52 Week Value)</td><td>£3.89</td></tr> </table>	2022/23 Average Rent (52 Week Value)	£92.39	2023/24 Average Rent (52 Week Value)	£96.28	Average Weekly Rent increase (52 Week Value)	£3.89
2022/23 Average Rent (52 Week Value)	£92.39						
2023/24 Average Rent (52 Week Value)	£96.28						
Average Weekly Rent increase (52 Week Value)	£3.89						
3.12	The average rent for the East of England as provided by the HomeLet statistics for November 2022 is £1,108 per month. This is the equivalent to £255.69 per week. This equates to ESC 2022/23 average rent being just 36.18% of the average rents for the area. The proposed 2023/24 ESC average rent increases this to 37.65% of the average rent charged in the area.						
3.13	The ESC average rent value will fluctuate slightly week-to-week, depending on the number of voids and re-lets during a month. However, the change will be pence, and it is compared each year during December, giving a consistent approach.						
3.14	The maximum tenants who are charged an affordable rent can receive in housing allowance of UC or Housing Benefits is the LHA rate. Therefore, all HRA Affordable Rents are set no higher than this value and are therefore eligible for benefits. This means that tenants who are in receipt of limited incomes will not be disadvantaged by the proposed rent increase.						
3.15	Not increasing rents by 6% or utilising rent flexibility where applicable would put a financial strain on the HRA. With increasing demands and costs across all service areas, and the requirement for significant investment in the decarbonisation of the current housing stock and new build programme, if rents are not utilised, the capital programme will be reduced.						
3.16	Due to the agreement ESC holds with the Secretary of State to retain its RTB receipts, the Council must invest in the provision of new affordable homes. Therefore, if the HRA capital programme was to be reduced, retrofitting the existing stock would have to be put on hold or reduced significantly. This will have an impact on tenants as it is within their best interest that the Council continues to invest in this, as these improvements will improve the energy efficiency of their home and contribute to reducing their energy bills.						
3.17	<p>The HRA dwelling budgets for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 are based on the Bank of England (BoE) CPI predictions plus 1% (Quarter 3 each year).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2024/25 (BoE) CPI 4.2% plus 1%</li> <li>• 2025/26 (BoE) CPI 2.9% plus 1%</li> <li>• 2026/27 (BoE) CPI 2.4% plus 1%</li> </ul>						
3.18	Although the same model has been used for 2025/26 and 2026/27 rent increases, the current arrangement finishes in 2024/25, and there is no indication at this time as to how rent increases will be determined. From 2027/28 onwards, a more prudent approach has been taken on the 30-year business plan, applying a 3% increase each year.						

3.19	Other factors are also taken into consideration when calculating the dwelling rent budget for future years. Such as disposals through RTB's or asset management of underperforming stock, reconversions, new build developments and acquisitions.  <b>Service Charges</b>
3.20	The proposed service charges for 2023/24 are set out in <b>Appendix C</b> of this report. The costs of providing the services have been reviewed and set at a level to ensure that the costs are recovered. The HRA cannot make a profit on the service charges, these are purely to recover HRA costs.
3.21	Grouped Home service charges relate to services provided to sheltered schemes and communal utility costs. The proposed general service charge for grouped homes for 2023/24 is set at an average weekly charge of £16.10 based on a 50-week collection year. This is an increase of £1.53 compared to 2022/23.
3.22	The average Grouped Homes heating charge for 2023/24 is proposed to increase from £13.35 to £16.30 based on a 50-week collection year. This is an increase of £2.95 compared to 2022/23. This is a direct result of the increases in energy bills over the last 12 months. ESC will be working hard over the next year to see how future years costs could be alleviated.
3.23	As part of the rents and service charge audit being undertaken during 2022/23 (see paragraph 3.9) it has been identified that a heating service, service charge has been incorrectly charged in previous years. This charge will be corrected on all tenants' accounts who are affected and will no longer be charged in the future. This has been taken into consideration when setting the HRA income budgets.  <b>Garage Rents</b>
3.24	Garage rents are also set out in <b>Appendix C</b> . Garage rents are also collected on a 50-week collection period. For 2023/24 tenant's weekly garage rent is proposed to increase from £9.00 to £9.45, an increase of £0.45 on the 2022/23 charge. The proposed increased for non-tenant weekly garage rent is £13.23 from £12.60 (inclusive of VAT), an increase of £0.63 on the 2022/23 charge.
3.25	The Garage rents are based on local market research. Historically, ESC has charged particularly low garage rents, however they are now at a similar level as other Local Council providers. Garage rents form part of the Councils' annual fees and charges report considered by Cabinet on 3 January 2023.
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>	
3.26	The repairs and maintenance revenue budget for 2023/24 has been set at £6.935 million, compared to a revised forecast of £6.338 million in the 2022/23 budget. An analysis of the repairs and maintenance revenue budget is set out in <b>Appendix D</b> . The revised forecast for 2022/23 includes budget identified as being required as part of the compliance work approved at Cabinet 6 October 2022.
3.27	The amounts included in the repairs and maintenance revenue budget are deemed sufficient to allow the Council to carry out all necessary major works and to maintain the decent homes standard in all its properties. It should also be sufficient to cover significant levels of work on fire risk safety, compliance contract management and decarbonisation of the housing stock. Much of the cost relating to decarbonisation and retro fitting is within the HRA capital programme.

3.28	An additional £3.492 million has been identified as being required in 2023/24 as part of the compliance work currently undertaken, which will be recommended to Full Council as part of the Capital Programme Report 2022/23 to 2026/27. These costs reflect significant increases in already planned works, as well as some new projects.
3.29	Also, as part of the same compliance works, an additional £451,000 has been added to the 2022/23 revised budget to cover Fire Risk Assessments, Stock condition Surveying, and fitting of Carbon Monoxide detectors to all HRA properties, which became a legal requirement during this financial year.
<b>Reserves and Balances</b>	
3.30	The HRA has five main Reserves as well as the HRA revenue working balance (see section 5.18 in <b>Appendix A2</b> for details on the revenue working balance), and the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR). <b>Appendix E</b> shows the movement and balances of these reserves for the budget period 2022/23 to 2026/27.
3.31	<b>HRA Debt Repayment Reserve</b> was set up in 2012/13. The viability of the self-financing regime depends ultimately on the Council acting prudently and in doing so, setting sufficient sums aside to meet its future liabilities. The transfer of funds to the Debt Repayment Reserve gives the Council flexibility around its future decisions for repaying the debt. The balance at 31 March 2027 is forecasted to be £2 million. This is after planned repayments of £960,000 in 2024/25 and a substantial borrowing instalment of £10 million in 2026/27. Payments into this reserve from 2027/28 will need to be substantial to meet the following instalment of £10 million due in 2031/32. Future debt repayment instalments will be funded by both the Debt Repayment Reserve and the MRR.
3.32	<b>HRA DHP Top-Up Reserve</b> was set up in 2012/13 with a fund of £500,000 taking the Welfare Reform Act 2012 into account. The reserve recognises the unexpected and exceptional difficulties tenants may face arising from these changes. Although the Act is now over ten years old, the financial difficulties tenants face has not faded.
3.33	This reserve was set up to 'top up' the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) made by the Council by the value used by HRA tenants, only if the total payments made were to exceed the value of the DHP grant received by the Council. To date, this has not been required. With increased Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) grant in recent years, it is unlikely to be required in 2022/23.
3.34	Due to this, discussions have been held to repurpose this reserve to help tenants during the cost-of-living crisis. Initially, a financial inclusion officer on a 2-year fixed-term bases has been identified, to provide support to tenants struggling with managing their finances.
3.35	Further discussions will be held on how to make best use of the remaining £422,000 balance in the coming months.
3.36	<b>MMI Reserve</b> is the Municipal Mutual Insurance Reserve. This reserve covers any potential old insurance claims relating to when the Council was covered by this insurer, and the new insurance providers will not cover such claims.
3.37	<b>Impairment/Revaluation Reserve</b> covers any unforeseen costs relating to revaluations of assets as part of the annual asset valuation. A review of this reserve has identified that it has not been required in over 7 years, and therefore will be released into the HRA during 2022/23, making best use of the funds held.

3.38	<b>Acquisition and Development Reserve</b> is used to transfer potential underspends into during a given financial year, to later fund the new build and redevelopment capital programme. The reserve is planned to be utilised between 2022/23 and 2024/25.
3.39	<b>Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)</b> was set up following the introduction of the self-financing on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2012 and to meet changes in Accounts and Audit Regulations from 2012/13. Depreciation charged to the HRA is no longer in the movement on the HRA statement, instead, the depreciation charged to the HRA is credited to the MRR. The MRR can be used to repay the principal elements of the HRA debt, as well as to finance capital expenditure on the existing dwelling stock. There are plans to use the MRR to part fund the capital programme in each financial year. The balance as 31 March 2027 is projected to be a £1.747 million. The balance of this reserve is monitored through the 30-year financial business model to ensure it remains at a balance sufficient to fund capital programme repairs and contribute to debt repayment in future years.

4 Reason/s for recommendation	
4.1	This report brings together all relevant information to enable Members to review, consider and comment upon the Council's Housing Revenue Account budgets, the proposed rental rent increase, service and other charges and movements in reserves and balances, before making final recommendations to Full Council on 22 February 2023. This report also forms the basis of Scrutiny Committee's review of the Budget at its meeting on 19 January 2023 as required under the Budget and Policy Framework.
4.2	To advise Members of the wider housing and welfare changes that will impact on future service delivery.

## Appendices

Appendices:	
<b>Appendix A1</b>	Budget changes to the financial period 2022/23 to 2026/27
<b>Appendix A2</b>	HRA 2023/24 to 2026/27 Budget – inclusive of revised 2022/23 position
<b>Appendix B</b>	Summary of Headings on chart of account
<b>Appendix C</b>	HRA Service and other charges
<b>Appendix D</b>	HRA Repairs and Maintenance Revenue Budget
<b>Appendix E</b>	HRA Balances and Reserve Summary
<b>Appendix F</b>	HRA Budget Key Assumptions
<b>Appendix G</b>	Scrutiny Committee Pre-Meeting Questions Submitted (HRA)
<b>Appendix H</b>	Extract from Unconfirmed minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 23

Background reference papers:		
Date	Type	Available From
November 2022	Budget Working papers	Financial Services
November 2022	Bank of England Monetary Policy Report November 2022	<a href="#">Monetary Policy Report - November 2022   Bank of England</a>
November 2021	Limit on annual rent increases 2022-23	<a href="#">Limit on annual rent increases 2021-22 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a> (This does relate to 2022-23, please follow link)
November 2022	East of England average rent statistics – November 2022	<a href="#">Average Rents in The East of England   Average Rental Prices 2019   HomeLet Rental Index</a>
17/11/2022	Article – Chancellor Confirms 7% rent cap for social landlords – Inside Housing	<a href="#">Inside Housing - News - Chancellor confirms 7% rent cap for social landlords</a>
February 2019	MHCLG Policy Statement on Rents	<a href="#">Policy statement on rents for social housing (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>
31/08/2022	Rent Cap Consultation (official guidance yet to be released)	<a href="#">Rent cap on social housing to protect millions of tenants from rising cost of living - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
Last updated 15/11/2021	Rent Standard 2020	<a href="#">Rent Standard and guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>

## Budget changes to the financial period 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Table C

HRA Budget update	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Strategic Theme/Other Factors	
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		
<b>Additional Cost</b>							
Repairs and Maintenance service cost increase	503	197	328	235	335	Growing our Economy/Caring for our Environment	Increase Material costs, increased cost of services and additional compliance works previously approved at cabinet.
Digital Transformation Programme	0	35	12	16	16	Digital by Default	Increase in investment in analytical software and digital transformation programme.
Norse Services	25	40	40	40	40	Economic Impact	Norse services increased charges. Future years still to be fully reviewed.
Consultancy costs	330	120	0	0	0	Growing our Economy	External consultancy costs relating to HRA compliance.
running of schemes (sheltered and non- sheltered)	47	51	49	48	48	Economic Impact	Increases in utilities bills for all schemes.
Housing Development Programme	29	221	90	91	91	Pandemic Impact	Revenue costs associated with Housing development, Redevelopment and retrofit programme.
Housing staff payaward	185	290	290	290	290	Economic Impact	2023-24 payaward impact on HRA staffing.
New Compliance Team - Repairs	0	197	206	215	224	Government Policy	New team approved at Cabinet 06.12.22
New Post with in Choice Based Letting Team	10	79	87	91	105	Economic Impact	Additional posts approved at Cabinet 06.12.22
New Handyman & caretaker posts	0	86	90	94	99	Economic Impact	Additional posts approved at Cabinet 06.12.22
New Financial Inclusion Officer	0	38	40	0	0	Economic Impact	Additional 2 year fixed Term post to support tenants through the cost-of-living crisis and rent refund process.
Rents, rates and other charges	11	20	0	0	0	Enabling our Communities	Increase on council tax and rates, increase due to redevelopment and development programme.
Baseline budget increase	0	0	0	0	72	Economic Impact	2026/27 budget starts at 2025/26 budget value. Inflation added to running costs of the HRA.
Insurance Premiums	14	50	53	55	56	Economic Impact	External impact, insurance premiums have increased across the Council.
Depreciation charge	140	102	279	302	556	Government Policy	Depreciation is linked to the capital programme.
Direct Revenue Financing - source of finance for capital programme	0	0	0	0	525	Remaining Financially Sustainable	2026/27 base is 2025/26 budget. Increase as other funding such as Capital receipts are utilised.
	<b>1,294</b>	<b>1,526</b>	<b>1,564</b>	<b>1,477</b>	<b>2,457</b>		
<b>Additional Income</b>							
Dwelling Rent income	0	-31	-438	-642	-1,215	Government Policy	7% increase applied to 2023/24. 2026/27 base is 2025/26 budget. BOI predicted CPI + 1% for 2024/25 to 2026/27.
Non Dwelling Income (Garage Rents)	-2	-5	-5	-5	-10	Remaining Financially Sustainable	2026/27 base is 2025/26 budget. 5% increase applied to 2023/24 to increase rents inline with out local authority providers.
Non Dwelling Income (Leases and Wayleaves)	-15	-15	-15	-15	-15	Remaining Financially Sustainable	New lease in place for HRA property, and correction to baseline budget for Wayleaves.
Contribution towards expenditure	-36	0	0	0	0	Government Policy	One off payment of repaid RTB discount.
Contribution towards expenditure	-15	0	0	0	0	Remaining Financially Sustainable	Solar energy and renewable contributions increase in 2023/24.
Contribution towards expenditure	-19	-24	0	0	0	Remaining Financially Sustainable	Reserve contribution to specific development sites.
Grant funding for TA extended for 2 years	0	-44	-40	0	0	Remaining Financially Sustainable	Funding through Rough Sleeper Initiative to contribute to the use of HRA scheme as TA.
Interest on cash balances	-107	-124	-130	-125	-125	Economic Impact	Increase in average interest received.
	<b>-194</b>	<b>-243</b>	<b>-628</b>	<b>-787</b>	<b>-1,365</b>		
<b>Reduced Income</b>							
Dwelling Rent income	654	0	0	0	0	Government Policy	Conversion of affordable rents back to social formula rent + Flexibility allowance.
Service charges and facilities income	392	349	340	330	310	Government Policy	Removal of incorrect heating service charge.
Reimbursement of costs	200	203	206	208	208	Remaining Financially Sustainable	Removal of private works income, focusing on HRA stock. Equivalent costs removed also.
Reimbursement of costs	10	7	7	7	7	Economic Impact	Correction to baseline - reduction of court costs recovered.
	<b>1,256</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>525</b>		

<b>Savings</b>							
Dwelling Rent Write-offs	-100	-100	0	0	0	Economic Impact	Unlikely Dwelling rent write-offs will be carried out in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
Housing Staff Vacancies across all teams	-646	0	0	0	0	Economic Impact	Unable to fill some vacant post, new posts not yet filled, and movement in staff.
Change in NI and Pension % applied	-14	-94	-94	-94	-94	Government Policy	Government reduced NI contribution from Nov 2022 and Employer Pension contribution reduced from 32% to 25% from 2023/24.
Digital Transformation Programme	-7	0	0	0	0	Digital by Default	Reprofiling of implementation of some software.
Provision for Bad Debt	-31	-29	-27	-25	-25	Economic Impact	Increase on provision for bad debt not required while rent refunds being processed. Will reassess in 2023/24.
HRA Contribution to Corporate and Democratic Services	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	Remaining Financially Sustainable	HRA share of corporate costs reduced slightly.
Rents, rates and other charges	0	0	-11	-11	-10	Remaining Financially Sustainable	Once redevelopment programme progresses, charges for associated properties/sites will be removed.
Support recharge from General Fund to HRA	-15	-41	-71	-76	-45	Remaining Financially Sustainable	Support recharges reviewed to reflect the services used by the HRA.
Direct Revenue Financing - source of finance for capital programme	-4,677	-348	-1,038	-1,375	0	Remaining Financially Sustainable	Delays in new build programme in 2022/23 and other sources of finance utilised in future years.
	<b>-5,493</b>	<b>-615</b>	<b>-1,244</b>	<b>-1,584</b>	<b>-177</b>		
<b>Use of Reserves</b>							
Debt repayment reserve	0	0	0	-500	-500	Use of Reserves	Remove transfer to Debt repayment reserve in 2025/26 and 2026/27, increase requirement in years thereafter.
Impairment/Revaluation Reserve	-256	0	0	0	0	Use of Reserves	Reserve unchanged for over 7 years. Release balance into the HRA.
Hardship/DHP Top up Reserve	0	-38	-40	0	0	Use of Reserves	Fund the financial inclusion officer 2 year fixed term post above.
	<b>-256</b>	<b>-38</b>	<b>-40</b>	<b>-500</b>	<b>-500</b>		
<b>Net Total Movements</b>	<b>-3,393</b>	<b>1,189</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>-849</b>	<b>940</b>		
<b>Net Total Movements between 2022/23 and 2026/27</b>						<b>-1,908</b>	

**5.1 Table C** details the changes across each financial year, with a brief description for the change. All changes have been put through the 30-year business plan to ensure the financial viability of the HRA. There is no adverse effect to the long-term financial position of the HRA by making these changes, and no requirement to take on additional borrowing at this stage. However, if the proposed dwelling rent increase of 6% is not adopted, reductions will be required in the Capital Programme. Careful budgeting and utilisation of all sources of finance, including capital receipts held has enabled the HRA to kick start its ambitious project to decarbonise its current housing stock, and future proof all new developments.



**HRA 2023/24 to 2026/27 Budget – inclusive of revised 2022/23 position**

**5.2 Table D** summarises the 2023/24 budget through to 2026/27, with a revised position for 2022/23. A brief description for each heading can be found in **Appendix B**.

**Table D**

	2022/23 Original £'000	2022/23 Revised £'000	2022/23 Movement £'000	2023/24 Budget £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000	2026/27 Budget £'000
<b>Income</b>							
Dwelling Rent	(19,926)	(19,372)	554	(20,634)	(21,481)	(22,182)	(22,755)
Non-Dwelling Rent	(160)	(177)	(17)	(184)	(188)	(192)	(197)
Service & Other Charges	(1,098)	(707)	391	(732)	(740)	(748)	(768)
Leaseholders Charges for Services	(10)	(10)	-	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
Contribution towards Expenditure	(33)	(89)	(56)	(57)	(33)	(33)	(33)
Reimbursement of Costs	(276)	(66)	210	(68)	(69)	(69)	(68)
Interest Income	(169)	(276)	(107)	(276)	(276)	(276)	(276)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(21,672)</b>	<b>(20,697)</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>(21,961)</b>	<b>(22,797)</b>	<b>(23,510)</b>	<b>(24,107)</b>
<b>10% of total income</b>	<b>(2,167)</b>	<b>(2,070)</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>(2,196)</b>	<b>(2,280)</b>	<b>(2,351)</b>	<b>(2,411)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Repairs & Maintenance	6,141	6,338	187	6,935	6,926	6,949	7,060
Supervision & Management	3,683	3,503	(180)	3,724	3,749	3,808	3,892
Special Services	2,440	2,870	430	2,705	2,618	2,659	2,696
Rents, Rates and other Charges	146	156	10	143	112	113	113
Movement in Bad Debt Provision	31	-	(31)	-	-	-	-
Contribution to CDC	95	92	(3)	92	92	92	92
Capital Charges	3,650	3,792	142	4,191	4,697	4,991	5,245
Interest Charges	2,106	2,106	-	2,106	2,066	2,026	2,026
Revenue Contribution to Capital	5,863	1,186	(4,677)	3,400	2,137	1,800	3,700
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	-	(256)	(256)	(38)	(40)	-	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>24,155</b>	<b>19,787</b>	<b>(4,368)</b>	<b>23,258</b>	<b>22,357</b>	<b>22,438</b>	<b>24,824</b>
<b>Movement in the HRA balance</b>	<b>2,483</b>	<b>(910)</b>	<b>(3,393)</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>(440)</b>	<b>(1,072)</b>	<b>717</b>
<b>HRA Balance carried forward</b>	<b>(807)</b>	<b>(4,200)</b>	<b>(3,393)</b>	<b>(2,903)</b>	<b>(3,343)</b>	<b>(4,415)</b>	<b>(3,698)</b>

**Highlights regarding 2022/23 revised position – Table D****Income**

**5.3** The decrease in dwelling rent is the result of estimated corrections to tenant rent accounts identified in the rents and service charge audit during 2022/23. Details and background information can be found in the Housing Regulation report going to Full council January 2023.

**5.4** The increase on non-dwelling rents relates to a new lease in place for an HRA Property.

**5.5** The decrease in service charges is the removal of an incorrect de-pooled service charge. This also forms part of the rent and service charge audit being carried out during 2022/23.

**5.6** Increase in contribution to expenditure is a one-off income relating to a repayment of RTB discount. This is where an individual has sold their property which they purchased from the

Council through RTB less than five years ago, therefore, requiring them to repay part of the discount they originally received. Also, a contribution towards a specific development project.

**5.7** Reimbursement of costs has reduced, due the maintenance team no longer carrying out disabled facility adaptations for the private sector housing team. The maintenance team will be focusing on HRA stock only. The equivalent expenditure has also been removed from the budget, giving a net nil impact.

**5.8** The increase in interest income directly relates to the increases in interest received by the council on cash balances.

## **Expenditure**

**5.9** The increase in repairs and maintenance relate to fire risk assessments, housing condition survey and CO2 detectors being fitted to all HRA owned stock. This was the result of the 'Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulation 2022'.

**5.10** The saving on Supervision and Management is the result of in year staff vacancies, and savings relating to the reduction in National Insurance from November 2022.

**5.11** The increase on special services relates to Consultancy costs for both the rents and service charge audit and repairs compliance work, as well as increased revenue costs associated with the development and redevelopment programme.

**5.12** The increase on rents, rates and other charges are linked to properties and sites that will be developed or redeveloped for housing provision.

**5.13** The decrease relating to Bad Debt Provision relates to corrections to be processed on tenants rent accounts that will likely reduce arrears levels. Bad Debt provision to revisited in 2023/24.

**5.14** Contribution to CDC is calculated on the HRA budget as a % of the Councils overall budget, giving a slight saving.

**5.15** The increase on Capital related charges is an increase in depreciation charge directly linked to the capital programme. This increase is transferred to the MRR and will help fund the repairs element of the capital programme and contribute to repayment of debt.

**5.16** There is a significant decrease in the revenue contribution to capital. This is a combination of reprofiling the development programme, redevelopment programme and making use of other sources of capital financing in year.

**5.17** The saving relating to Earmarked reserves is releasing the unused Reserve for impairments and revaluation of housing stock (See section 3.37).

## **2023/24 to 2026/27 Budgets**

**5.18 Table D** demonstrates a healthy HRA working balance. The carry forward balance from 2022/23 takes into consideration the estimated provision required for potential rent and service charge refunds. This gives an opening balance of £3.29 million. Best practice is considered to have a minimum working balance that approximates to 10% of the total income received in one year. The balance is planned to be drawn down in financial years 2023/24 and 2026/27, to make best use of the funds, but always remaining above the required 10% minimum.

**5.19** Key Assumptions used to assist in setting the HRA budgets can be seen in **Appendix F**.

**SUMMARY OF HEADINGS ON CHART OF ACCOUNT****Income.**

- **Dwelling Rent;** Rental income from tenants for housing (Including Housing Benefits).
- **Non-Dwelling Rent;** Rental income for garages, and any other assets rented out by the HRA.
- **Services and other Charges;** Service Charges and nonspecific income.
- **Leaseholder's charges for services;** Recharges to Leaseholders for works and services.
- **Contributions towards expenditure;** External contributions towards expenditure.
- **Reimbursement of costs;** Rechargeable works to a third party.
- **Interest Income;** Interest received on cash balances held by the HRA.

**Expenditure.**

- **Repairs and Maintenance;** General Repairs and Maintenance to all housing stock.
- **Supervision and Management;** Costs associated with running the HRA, e.g. tenant's services, office-based staff, IT etc.
- **Special Services;** Sheltered schemes, warden costs, property acquisitions, redevelopment/decarbonisation, and new development revenue costs.
- **Rents, Rates, and other Charges;** Council Tax charges for void properties and Business Rates.
- **Movement in Bad Debt Provision;** Bad debt provision is to hold funds to cover debt (arrears) that are unlikely to be recovered by the HRA. Current Bad Debt provision is at £872k.
- **Contribution to CDC;** CDC is Corporate & Democratic Core costs. This is the HRA's contribution towards these.
- **Capital Charges;** Depreciation charged to HRA assets. (This is transferred to the Major Repairs Reserve. This can fund capital work or contribute to paying down the debt).
- **Interest Charges;** The interest payments relating to HRA borrowing.
- **Revenue contribution to Capital;** Capital expenditure is large repairs work such as 'replacing a kitchen' or building new properties. These are funded from either the HRA 'Revenue Contribution', receipts held through the sale of assets (e.g. Right to Buy Properties), or other reserves and contributions.
- **Transfer to Earmark Reserves;** The HRA has several reserves, but the one used most frequently is the Debt Repayment Reserve. Money is transferred to this reserve each year to pay off the debt held by the HRA.

## HRA SERVICE AND OTHER CHARGES

The following charges are based on a 50 week collection year. Under current policies, the following increases/(Decreases) in charges are proposed for 2023/24.

	Average Weekly Charge 2022/23 £	Average Proposed Weekly Charge 2023/24 £	Average Weekly Increase/ (Decrease) £
<b>Grouped Homes Service Charges (average):</b>			
General Service Charge	14.57	16.10	1.53
Heating Charge	13.35	16.30	2.95
Communal Water Charge	2.51	1.22	-1.29
Support Charge	3.33	3.33	0.00
Laundry	3.90	3.90	0.00

	Weekly Charge 2022/23 £	Proposed Weekly Charge 23/24 £	Weekly Increase/ (Decrease) £
<b>Caretaker:</b>			
St Peter's Court	6.80	7.15	0.35
Dukes Head Street	5.05	5.30	0.25
Chapel Court	3.65	3.75	0.10

<b>Servicing:</b>			
Septic Tank Emptying/Servicing	5.34	5.61	0.27
Flue Maintenance	2.36	2.53	0.17
Grounds Maintenance (average) *	1.37	1.39	0.02
* Cost vary depending on size of land to maintain.			

<b>Other:</b>			
Communal Area Cleaning Service (average) **	2.22	2.55	0.33
** Cost vary depending on number and size of communal areas.			

	Weekly Charge 2022/23 £	Proposed Weekly Charge 2023/24 £	Weekly Increase/ (Decrease) £
<b>Garage Rents:</b>			
Tenants	9.00	9.45	0.45
Non Tenants (net of VAT)	10.50	11.03	0.53 (13.23 inclusive of VAT)

## HRA REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE REVENUE BUDGETS

	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Forecast Outturn	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Responsive Maintenance</b>						
Supervision and Management (See note 1 below)	2,205,400	2,306,700	2,485,500	2,416,700	2,429,000	2,535,300
Compliance Contract Management (See note 2 below)	0	8,800	331,500	348,900	363,900	379,100
Jobbing Repairs	1,133,200	1,347,700	1,350,000	1,350,000	1,350,000	1,350,000
Loft and Cavity wall Insulation	10,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Tenant Allowances	40,000	30,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Relet Repairs (Voids)	922,000	876,000	925,000	922,000	922,000	922,000
Asbestos - Removal	80,000	30,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Asbestos - Testing	95,000	30,000	95,000	95,000	95,000	95,000
Legionella	6,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Communal Areas	30,000	40,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Solid Fuel and Heating Repairs	10,000	23,000	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000
Electrical Testing & Repairs (See Note 3 below)	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Emergency Lighting	10,000	25,000	0	10,000	10,000	10,000
External Decoration	130,000	50,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Roof and PVC Panelling Cleaning	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Fire Fighting Equipment and Detection	5,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000
Fire Risk Assessments (See note 3 below)	0	180,000	9,800	15,400	25,900	15,400
Installation of CO2 detectors (See note 3 below)	0	139,000	0	0	0	0
Stock Condition Survey (See note 3 below)	0	84,000	0	0	0	0
Lift servicing, maintenance and installation (See note 3 below)	8,000	62,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000
Disabled Adaptations (See note 4 below)	230,300	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Door Porter and Security Systems (See Note 5 below)	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Environmental Works/Energy Efficiency	5,000	9,400	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500
Drainage and Pumping Stations	9,900	11,500	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500
Mutual Exchange	10,000	12,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Rechargeable Works - Incl's Leaseholder Properties	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Servicing Contracts & Repairs	486,000	476,000	486,000	516,000	516,000	516,000
<b>Total Responsive Maintenance</b>	<b>5,690,800</b>	<b>6,108,100</b>	<b>6,469,800</b>	<b>6,461,000</b>	<b>6,498,800</b>	<b>6,609,800</b>
<b>Planned Maintenance</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Chimneys	20,000	10,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
External Walls, Boundary and retaining walls (See Note 2 below)	60,000	15,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Canopy's and Porches	0	5,000	15,000	15,000	0	0
Paths / Hardstanding	250,000	100,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
Outbuildings	40,000	20,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Structural / Damp / Drainage / etc	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
<b>Total Planned Maintenance</b>	<b>450,000</b>	<b>230,000</b>	<b>465,000</b>	<b>465,000</b>	<b>450,000</b>	<b>450,000</b>
<b>Total HRA Housing Repairs</b>	<b>6,140,800</b>	<b>6,338,100</b>	<b>6,934,800</b>	<b>6,926,000</b>	<b>6,948,800</b>	<b>7,059,800</b>

**Notes:**

Note 1 - Supervision and Management of the Repairs and Maintenance Team, unrecoverable cost, stock and equipment.

Note 2 - New Contract Compliance Team to be recruited from 2023/24 approved at Cabinet 06 December 2022.

Note 3 - As part of the compliance work identified and undertaken, previously approved by Cabinet 04 October 2022.

Note 4 - The Housing team previously completes Disabled Adaption works for the Private Sector Housing team, however this has finished to concentrate on HRA stock.

Note 5 - Door Porter security system charges where previously charged directly under the schemes they relate to, however they have been combined to monitor more accurately.

## Appendix E

### HRA BALANCE AND RESERVE SUMMARY

#### HRA WORKING BALANCE

	Closing Balance 31/03/22	2022/23 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/23	2023/24 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/24	2024/25 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/25	2025/26 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/26	2026/27 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/27
	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000
HRA Working Balance *	-3,290	-910	0	-4,200	0	1,297	-2,903	-440	0	-3,343	-1,072	0	-4,415	0	717	-3,698
10% Requirement	-2,121			-2,167			-2,224			-2,278			-2,328			-2,328

#### HRA EARMARKED RESERVES

	Closing Balance 31/03/22	2022/23 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/23	2023/24 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/24	2024/25 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/25	2025/26 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/26	2026/27 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/27
	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000
Debt Repayment Reserve	-13,000	0	0	-13,000	0	0	-13,000	0	960	-12,040	0	0	-12,040	0	10,000	-2,040
HRA DHP topup Reserve	-500	0	0	-500	0	38	-462	0	40	-422	0	0	-422	0	0	-422
MMI Reserve	-60	0	0	-60	0	0	-60	0	0	-60	0	0	-60	0	0	-60
Impairment/Revaluation Reserve	-256	0	256	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Acquisition & Development Reserve	-6,300	0	234	-6,066	0	4374	-1,692	0	1692	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brampton Sinking Fund	-1	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	0	0	-1
<b>Total HRA Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>-20,117</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>-19,627</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,412</b>	<b>-15,215</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,692</b>	<b>-12,523</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-12,523</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>-2,523</b>

#### HRA CAPITAL RESERVE

	Closing Balance 31/03/22	2022/23 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/23	2023/24 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/24	2024/25 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/25	2025/26 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/26	2026/27 Movements		Closing Balance 31/03/27
	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000	Transfer In	Transfer Out	£'000
HRA Major Repairs Reserve	-13,754	-3,764	4,369	-13,149	-4,175	14,051	-3,273	-4,681	6,430	-1,524	-4,965	4,980	-1,509	-5,218	4,980	-1,747

\* HRA working balance has been reduced by the estimated required refund provision.

## HRA BUDGET KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The following key assumptions have been made in the budgets.

Income	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Dwelling rents annual increase (see paragraph 3.16)	6.0%	5.2%	3.9%	3.4%
Allowance for voids - % of total rent roll	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
Garage rents annual increase	5.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Charges for services & facilities annual increase *	0.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Write-off allowance **	£0	£0	£100,000	£100,000
Number of dwellings lost through Right To Buys (RTB's)	30	30	30	30
Number of new dwellings added to the stock	21	46	42	40
Average interest rate on HRA balances	2.32%	2.32%	2.32%	2.32%

**Expenditure**

Bad Debt Provision	No amendments to the bad debt provision until the rent and service charge audit is complete and potential credits applied to tenant rent
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\* The 2023/24 service charges have varying increases, see appendix C. 3% has been applied to future years inline with increased budget costs.

\*\* No write-off allowance is included in 2023/24 and 2024/25 while the rent and service charge audit is being carried out and potential refunds are to be processed.

## Scrutiny Committee Pre-Meeting Questions Submitted.

### Questions Received from the Scrutiny Committee ahead of the meeting on 19 January 2023

Please note – page, section and figures referred to in the questions below relate to the report presented to Cabinet on 3 January 2023.

#### HRA Budget Report

1. **P216 2.35 at an average of 18 units a year, it will take 250 years to retrofit our housing stock? Are we using warm home grants? Can we work with a contribution from long term tenants to speed up this process so that it is part financed by savings in tenants energy bills? Where is the total expenditure on these projects? P252 of capital programme has £1.8m for retrofitting – can I have a breakdown please? How many houses done, what done, plan for next year?**

The Council like many housing providers is faced with a huge challenge to determine how it can maintain its compliance, housebuilding and retrofitting aspirations.

Unfortunately, warmer home grants cannot be used on Housing Revenue Account properties, and improvements to a tenant's property legally cannot be charged to the tenant. The expenditure for these projects will therefore have to form part of the HRA Capital Programme.

The £1.8 million forms part of the original 22/23 budget for retrofitting the 2 pilot schemes mentioned in 2.35 of the HRA Budget Report. As these are pilot schemes, these will be the first retrofits carried out on HRA stock.

The £1.8 million budget has been reprofiled and increased in 23/24 and 24/25. The budget has been increased to £2.4 million in 23/24 and £2.7 million in 24/25. Delivering the 17 units in 23/24 and 19 units in 24/25 as stated in 2.35. These budgets are still based on estimated costs, and the full scope of work is yet to be agreed, so these values could change.

For future years there is £1 million budget for retrofitting and a further £1 million for redevelopment of HRA stock, which could include elements of retrofitting.

ESC will shortly be commencing a stock condition survey of all properties, with approximately 20% of stock being surveyed annually. This will enable us to build more bespoke improvement plans for the properties, based on the robust data we will then hold.

During 2023/24 a thorough review of our HRA Business Plan will be carried out, which will enable ESC to consider what its long-term financial options are for capital improvements, retrofitting and the development of additional stock. This will be presented to Members for consideration once this work has progressed further.



- 2. P229 - good to see that loft and cavity wall insulation is being increased from £10k pa to £50k pa next year, and energy efficiency from £5k to £9k but this seems paltry in a budget of £6m.**

Loft and Cavity Wall insulation has previously been recorded under void repairs. The work has always been completed, however with monitoring energy efficiency of our stock, this expenditure will be recorded separately. Previously the £10,000 related to loft insulation only, but cavity wall insulation has been combined. The value is relatively low because most of the housing stock has sufficient loft/wall insulation already, and this budget is for properties that may need upgrades, improvements where the insulation is becoming old and needs replacing. It is not to insulate all the properties, but to ensure the properties remain insulated the best they can be.

The energy efficiency budget relates to the new intelligent energy software mentioned in the environmental section of the HRA Budget Report.

Much of the energy efficiency work carried out on the HRA stock forms part of the HRA Capital Programme. This is because it is an investment or improvement to a property, rather than a repair. From 23/24 there is a £500,000 per annum budget specifically for energy efficiency work (increased from £200,000).

Other works that will contribute to the energy efficiency of a property will be re-roofing, which there is £450,000 per annum, and replacement of boilers/upgrades to central heating system's again, £500,000 per annum allocated.

Window and door replacement will also contribute to the energy efficiency of a property.

Currently 1,762 properties have a current EPC rating (rating that is less than 10 years old), of which 1,266 have a rating of C or above. EPC's will be completed on all properties as part of the stock condition surveys, due to commence in 2023/24.

- 3. How much is the HRA liable to pay for overcharging affordable council rents? How is this risk being registered? Is there a reserve entry?**

ESC along with external expertise have been carrying out an in depth, forensic audit of all rent accounts, which is now nearing completion, at which point the final value the HRA is liable to repay will be clear. The details of the audit and financial implications can be found in the 'Housing Regulation' Report going to Full Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The agenda and reports for this meeting will be distributed on the 17<sup>th</sup> January, giving the opportunity to read before the Scrutiny Committee meets on the 19<sup>th</sup> January. This report follows initial correspondence sent to all Members in 2022 and periodic updates to Group Leaders.

A provision has been made for the estimated values to be repaid, and the HRA opening working balance has this taken into consideration. The budgets are based on full refunds being repaid, and it is not anticipated the refunds will affect the budgets presented in the HRA Budget Report.

A provision in accounting terms is not the same as a reserve and therefore you will not see a reserve entry. The provision will be held in the Councils balance sheet as a back dated adjustment to the 2021-22 accounts. HRA Reserves are shown as part of the budget report because there is control over how much a reserve is topped up/used in a given financial year and there is flexibility to release a reserve back into revenue if they are unused, where as a provision cannot. The creation of a provision is legally necessary for a specific expense.

To mitigate the risk of this happening again, a new rents and service charge policy will be brought to Cabinet for adoption on the 7<sup>th</sup> March. In addition to this, internal processes are currently being updated to maximise the use of the housing software Orchard and remove the reliance of manual spreadsheets. Training will be given to relevant staff on both.

It is important to note that the historical rent regulation issues and refunds, should not be confused with the budget setting process. This is part of a separate paper, which will be presented to Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Therefore, any detailed questions relating to this matter would be better raised at that meeting.

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Thursday, 19 January 2023 at 6.30pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Mick Richardson

**Officers present:** Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Ben Bix (Democratic Services Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Isobel Rolfe (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Julian Sturman (Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management), Heather Tucker (Head of Housing), Amber Welham (Finance Business Partner – Housing), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

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**6**

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2023/24 to 2026/27**

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, Councillor Cook introduced report **ES/1419** and summarised that the HRA budgets were fully funded to meet the Council's HRA spending plans, including the Capital Investment Programme and reserve balances in accordance with the HRA Financial Business Plan. Councillor Cook explained that Local Authorities were able to increase rents by up to CPI +1% utilising the September 2022 CPI value of 10.1% in calculating the increase. However, to protect current tenants the Government had applied a 7% rent increase cap for 2023/24 to strike a balance between the pressures that social housing providers were faced with and affordability for tenants. East Suffolk Council was proposing a 6% rent increase for 2023/24 to enable the HRA to meet its ambitions within its Capital Programme and continue to deliver services to tenants.

The Council would continue to collect rent and service charges on a 50-week cycle except for those dwellings let as Temporary Accommodation. The proposed average weekly rent was £96.28 for 2023/24 -an increase of £3.89 compared to 2022/23. Councillor Cook explained that service charges could only recuperate the cost of providing a service. The proposed average weekly General Service Charge for Grouped Homes for 2023/24 had been set at £16.10. An increase of £1.53 compared to 2022/23. Overall, the budget proposals forecasted an HRA working balance for 2023/24 of £2.903 million, maintaining it above the minimum acceptable limit of 10% of total income. The Chairman thanked Councillor Cook for his introduction and invited questions from Members.

Councillor Beavan thanked Officers for their response to his questions submitted in advance and asked three supplementary questions. Firstly, he queried the value for money of the retrofitting programme which would cost £1.8m in the first year to retrofit 17 houses; secondly whether the size of the budget for wall insulation was sufficient to make a real difference, and thirdly as there were 500 properties with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of less than C, was there a risk of not maintaining all properties to the same standard. At the invitation of the Chairman, who also expressed concerns with the timescale and cost of the retrofitting programme, the Head of Housing explained that the Council was challenged to determine how it could maintain its compliance, housebuilding and retrofitting aspirations.

Turning to Councillor Beavan's questions, firstly two pilot retrofitting schemes were planned, and those schemes would be of a greater standard than ordinary retrofits, and not all retrofits would cost the same. The £1.8m budget had been reprofiled and increased in to £2.4m in 2023/24 and £2.7m in 2024/25. The budgets were based on estimated costs and were subject to change as there were capacity shortages in retrofitting skills and resources nationally. Secondly, the budget for wall insulation was appropriate because most of the housing stock already had sufficient insulation, and the budget was intended for properties that may need upgrading where the insulation was becoming old or needed replacement. Thirdly, each of the improvement and efficiency measures that would be undertaken would improve the EPC rating and EPCs would be completed on all properties as part of the stock condition surveys due to commence in 2023/24.

In response to Councillor Gooch, the Head of Housing emphasised the importance of the data collection during the stock condition surveys which would then inform the HRA Business Plan. The in-house DLO team did not currently have sufficient capacity to undertake the works but once the rate and scale of retrofitting had been established, consideration would be given to how best to deliver the schemes to best achieve economies of scale through a report to Cabinet.

In response to further questions from the Chairman and Councillors Coulam, Topping and Green, Officers clarified that:

The forthcoming refresh of the HRA Business Plan would illustrate by when it was intended that all the Council's housing stock would be rated as with a minimum EPC of C  
Private sector housing adaptations for disabled residents were distinct from the Council's HRA stock, and were budgeted for and resourced separately

Housing staff vacancies affected all providers and had been escalated to the corporate risk register

Arrears had stabilized for the first time since universal credit had been introduced in 2015/16 and continued to be monitored. Contextually, the level of arrears at 5.79% of total rents and charges raised was below the local authority provider average of 8%

Universal Credit was paid directly to the tenant, not the housing provider

Short-term consultants had been engaged to tackle compliance issues in housing and consultancy fees had increased due to inflationary cost pressures

The HRA did not currently charge any tenants full market rent as very few tenants were in a position to exceed the £60,000 annual household income threshold. The Cabinet Member cautioned that the cost of identifying those tenants (if any) outweighed the benefit of any additional income.

The Strategic Director explained that due to the circumstances of residents which included the rising cost of living, there would always be some level of rent arrears. The Council had invested in predictive analysis software to actively keep arrears to a minimum. Councillor

Hedgley asked whether there were mitigations in place to help those residents in arrears and the Strategic Director explained that the Anglia Revenues Partnership and the Council's new Financial Inclusion Officers were able to offer support to those who needed it. The Cabinet Member further emphasised that the government had provided support through a non-repayable grant of £150 on Council Tax Bills, and the energy support credit of £400.

Councillor Gooch empathised with those tenants that had been overcharged rent and sought assurance that the Council would make clear that refunds would only be made by East Suffolk Council, not an unknown third party. Officers noted the feedback and offered assurance that refunds would be on a case-by-case basis, rather than a flat rate refund.

The Chairman invited Members to debate the recommendations. Councillor Beavan proposed an amendment to add an additional recommendation to bring forward a report to Cabinet within 12 months setting out a detailed programme to deliver the retrofitting projects. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Strategic Director cautioned that a programme would be forthcoming to Cabinet but not necessarily in the timescale indicated, as compliance matters had been prioritised. Councillor Gooch was of the view that the amendment would be more suitably directed to the Environment Task Group, which Councillor Beavan as proposer was content with.

The Chairman moved to a vote on the amendment proposed by Councillor Beavan, seconded by Councillor Topping, to insert an additional recommendation that:

*A report be made to the Environment Task Group within 12 months setting out a detailed programme to deliver HRA Housing Stock retrofitting projects.*

The amendment was **CARRIED**

The Chairman invited debate on the substantive recommendations, there being none the Chairman proposed, Councillor Coulam seconded, a vote was taken and the Committee unanimously

#### **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Cabinet**

1. The draft HRA budget for 2023/24, and the indicative figures for 2024/25 to 2026/27
2. Movements in HRA Reserves and Balances
3. Proposed rent increase of up to 6%. 1% less than the Government 7% rent Cap for 2023/24 rent setting
4. Service charges and associated fees for 2023/24
5. Rent and Service Charges to be charged over a 50-week period unless being used for Temporary Accommodation when a 52-week period will be applied
6. A report be made to the Environment Task Group within 12 months setting out a detailed programme to deliver HRA Housing Stock retrofitting projects.

To note the following:

7. Revised outturn position for 2022/23
8. Changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare to be noted
9. Effects of the cost-of-living crisis to the HRA to be noted.



**FULL COUNCIL**

**Wednesday, 22 February 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Maurice Cook Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Brian Mew Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer <a href="mailto:brian.mew@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">brian.mew@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

As part of the budget setting process, the Council is required to agree a programme of capital expenditure for the coming four years. The capital programme plays an important part in the delivery of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which in turn supports wider service delivery. The report sets out the Council's Capital Programme including revisions to the current programme for the financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27. Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Capital Programme at its meeting on 19 January 2023 as required under the Budget and Policy Framework

### **Options:**

The Capital Programme forms part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. The Council is required to set an annual budget and therefore no other options have been considered.

### **Recommendation/s:**

That Full Council approves:

1. The General Fund capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 including revisions as shown in Appendix B.
2. The Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 including revisions as shown in Appendix G.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

As set out in the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for preparing and submitting capital budgets to Cabinet and Council

The 2023/24 capital budget has been considered at the following Council meetings:

- Cabinet 3 January 2023
- Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023
- Cabinet 7 February 2023

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

- East Suffolk Council Strategic Plan
- East Suffolk Council Medium Term Financial Strategy
- East Suffolk Council Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Policy
- East Suffolk Council Capital Strategy
- Annual Governance Statement
- Financial Procedure Rules

**Environmental:**

All projects in the Programme are intended to contribute to the Strategic Plan Priority of Caring for our environment.

**Equalities and Diversity:**

No direct impact from this report, where subsequent individual business cases are presented Equality Impact Assessments are prepared.

**Financial:**

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (Government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves, and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing and leasing). Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as "Minimum Revenue Provision" (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance.

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP. The CFR is expected to increase by £77.48 million between 2022/23 and 2026/27 which is due to capital projects being financed through borrowing. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the CFR.

The Council expects to comply with this in the medium term, but the scale of the Capital Programme as currently drafted is such that the Council would begin to approach its borrowing limits over the life of the proposed programme if other sources of finance were not available. The programme as presented does not pre-empt the realisation of capital receipts and only those receipts already received will be used as financing.

In addition, external funding is expected to be secured in respect of other major projects in the Programme, assisting the overall position and the ability of the Council to deliver on its Strategic Plan.

**Human Resources:**

No impacts directly arising from this report.

**ICT:**

No impacts directly arising from this report.

**Legal:**

No impacts directly arising from this report.

**Risk:**

No impact directly arising from this report.

**External Consultees:**

External consultation has been conducted on a range of individual projects and programmes within the overall Capital Programme, and a number of programmes such as the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project and the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan feature programme boards which include key external stakeholders as part of their governance arrangements. The Scrutiny Committee considered the Capital Programme as part of the Budget process at its meeting on 19 January 2023. On the 24 November 2022 Southwold Harbour Management Committee



	were also consulted on the proposed capital budget allocation and expenditure for Southwold.
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being, and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education, and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b>  The Capital Programme forms part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework and outlines the Council's capital investment in the assets, services, and infrastructure of the district in accordance with the key priorities and objectives of the Strategic Plan.			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	<p>The Capital Programme feeds directly into the Council's MTFS which in turn is the mechanism by which the key Strategic Plan objective of Financial Sustainability will be delivered over the medium term. The Capital Programme contributes directly to the Council's specific actions within the Strategic Plan and identifies the financing for these projects.</p>
2 Current position	
2.1	<p>Capital expenditure within the Council is split into two main components, the General Fund Capital Programme, and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme.</p> <p>The capital programme has been compiled taking account of the following main principles, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain an affordable four-year rolling capital programme.</li> <li>• ensure capital resources are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan,</li> <li>• maximise available resources by actively seeking external funding and disposal of surplus assets; and</li> <li>• not to anticipate receipts from disposals until they are realised</li> </ul>
2.2	<p>General Fund Capital Programme Summary</p> <p>Capital expenditure relates to the acquisition of fixed assets or expenditure that adds to (and not merely maintains) the value of an existing fixed asset.</p> <p>Following the review and revisions to programme by project officers the revised capital programme has been reviewed by the Asset Management Group along with the Chief Finance Officer and is presented at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix A: - General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Summary, shows a summary of the capital programme and planned financing.</li> <li>• Appendix B: - General Fund Capital Programme Revisions 2022/23 to 2026/27, shows budget revisions to previously approved projects</li> <li>• Appendix C: - General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 extract of budget increases greater than £1m and budget decreases greater than £0.10m.</li> <li>• Appendix D: - General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 new projects, shows the new projects being recommended for approval and inclusion within the existing programme as shown in Appendix B.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix E: - General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 extract of externally funded projects, is an extract of the programme showing all projects which are subject to external grants/contributions.</li> </ul> <p>The General Fund capital programme for 2022/23 through to 2026/27 has a total financing requirement of £410.43m which will be financed through both internal and external resources.</p> <p>The programme from 2022/23 to 2026/27 benefits from £287.76m (70%) of external grants and contributions, the use of £14.67m (4%) of reserves, £4m of capital receipt (1%) and internal/external borrowing of £104m (25%).</p> <p>Where projects have identified external funding, if this is not secured then those projects will look to secure other funding or will not be pursued. Similarly, where projects require significant borrowing in excess of £3m, these will require robust business cases to underpin the investment. The project business case should be presented to Council for approval prior to the borrowing being secured.</p>
2.3	<p>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme Summary</p> <p>Capital expenditure relates to the acquisition of fixed assets or expenditure that adds to (and not merely maintains) the value of an existing fixed asset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appendix F: - HRA Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Summary shows a summary of the capital programme and planned financing.</li> <li>Appendix G: - HRA Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27, shows an update to the HRA capital budgets.</li> </ul> <p>The HRA capital programme for 2022/23 through to 2026/27 has a total budget requirement £82.63m which will be financed through both internal and external resources.</p> <p>The programme from 2022/23 to 2026/27 relies upon £2.99m (4%) of external grants and contributions, the use of £40.78 (49%) of capital reserves, direct revenue financing of £12.34m (15%) and £26.52 (32%) of capital receipt.</p>
2.4	<p>Approval of the Capital Programme by Full Council is an authority for Council officers to incur expenditure up to the approved budget amounts and where applicable, securing external funding.</p>
2.5	<p>Further to the Capital Programme Report being considered by Cabinet on the 3 January 2023 and the Scrutiny Committee on the 19 January 2023, two further Government grant funded programmes or schemes have been added to the Programme. Full Council on 25 January 2023 approved the process for the Council acting as the Freeport East accountable body to spend £25m of Freeport Capital Seed Funding over the next three years. This expenditure is fully funded and relates to the Harwich and Gateway 14 Freeport tax sites as well as Felixstowe. DHLUC also announced the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), a £500m capital grant fund in financial years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 to support selected local authorities in England to obtain and refurbish property in order to provide</p>

	sustainable housing for those displaced by recent conflicts who are unable to secure their own accommodation. This national initiative is intended to reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs, and deliver accommodation that as far as possible allows for the future conversion of housing units to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities. Provisional allocations and requests for expressions of interest have been invited by DLUHC, and the capital programme has been updated to include this potential allocation.
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### 3 How to address current situation

3.1	<p>The General Fund capital programme has previously been approved by Full Council on 28 September 2022 and has been updated to reflect the most current required budget and are fully detailed in the appendices to this report.</p> <p>New General Fund capital projects have been identified as part of the budget setting process and the required new capital budget request process review has been undertaken. These projects are shown in Appendix C.</p>
3.2	The HRA capital programme has previously been approved by Full Council on 26 January 2022 and has been updated to reflect the most current required budget and are fully detailed in the appendices to this report.

### 4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	The Council's constitution requires the CFO to prepare and present to Cabinet and Full Council the Council's capital programme for approval.
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## Appendices

Appendices:	
<b>Appendix A</b>	General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Summary
<b>Appendix B</b>	General Fund Capital Programme Revisions 2022/23 to 2026/27
<b>Appendix C</b>	General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 extract of budget increases greater than £1m and budget decreases greater than £0.10m.
<b>Appendix D</b>	General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 New Projects
<b>Appendix E</b>	General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Extract of Externally Funded Projects
<b>Appendix F</b>	HRA Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Summary
<b>Appendix G</b>	HRA Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27
<b>Appendix H</b>	Pre-submitted Scrutiny questions regarding the Southwold Enterprise Hub and the HRA (Housing Revenue Account) new dwellings budget ahead of the meeting on 19 January 2023.
<b>Appendix I</b>	Extract from Unconfirmed Minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023 Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023 - Draft Minutes

<b>Background reference papers:</b>
None.

**General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Summary**

SUMMARY - GENERAL FUND PROGRAMME	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2025/26	2026/27	2022/23 to 2025/26 £000	2022/23 to 2026/27 £000
	£000 Original Budget	£000 Revised Budget	£000 Original Budget	£000 Revised Budget	£000 Original Budget	£000 Revised Budget	£000 Original Budget	£000 Revised Budget	£000 Original Budget	Original Total	Revised Total
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>											
Economic Development & Regeneration	5,586	1,725	15,320	14,363	10,377	8,782	9,842	22,849	100	41,125	47,819
Environmental Services & Port Health	406	647	50	484	50	0	50	0	0	556	1,131
Financial Services	400	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	400	400
ICT - Digital & Programme Management	927	927	550	550	250	250	250	250	250	1,977	2,227
Operations	13,901	13,455	32,205	37,805	30,505	34,463	22,305	22,755	1,255	98,916	109,733
Planning & Coastal Management	19,432	19,632	31,109	31,084	36,774	36,749	36,200	36,175	85,885	123,515	209,525
General Fund Housing	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,690	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	4,500	7,690
Long Term Debtors	1,500	1,900	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,500	6,900
Central Government Grant Funding to Freeport East via ESC as Accountable Body	0	250	0	19,810	0	4,940	0	0	0	0	25,000
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>43,152</b>	<b>39,936</b>	<b>80,234</b>	<b>112,786</b>	<b>78,956</b>	<b>86,184</b>	<b>70,147</b>	<b>83,029</b>	<b>88,490</b>	<b>272,489</b>	<b>410,425</b>
<b>Financed By:-</b>											
Borrowing	8,595	12,397	24,350	30,675	24,400	28,933	22,200	31,125	875	79,545	104,005
Capital Receipt	1,000	0	4,000	4,000	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	4,000
Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grants	25,534	21,819	48,439	72,982	53,951	55,046	47,342	51,099	86,810	175,266	287,756
Reserves	8,023	5,720	3,445	5,129	605	2,205	605	805	805	12,678	14,664
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>43,152</b>	<b>39,936</b>	<b>80,234</b>	<b>112,786</b>	<b>78,956</b>	<b>86,184</b>	<b>70,147</b>	<b>83,029</b>	<b>88,490</b>	<b>272,489</b>	<b>410,425</b>

### General Fund Capital Programme Revisions 2022/23 to 2026/27

Strategic Theme	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Growing our Economy	Towns Fund - Cultural Quarter (Phase 1)	600	280	6,000	3,690	8,640	5,160	9,110	15,220	0	EG/IB
Growing our Economy	Towns Fund -Station Quarter (Former Post & Sorting Office)	3,000	35	0	2,300	0	1,000	0	0	0	EG/IB
Growing our Economy	Towns Fund -Station Quarter (Public Realm)	0	0	830	0	0	0	0	0	0	EG
Growing our Economy	Towns Fund - Historic Quarter	1,000	475	2,210	715	0	710	0	5,930	0	EG
Growing our Economy	Towns Fund - Port Gateway Improvement Project	100	35	1,050	2,470	1,500	145	0	0	0	EG
Growing our Economy	Towns Fund - Seafront Vision Delivery	100	81	1,170	719	0	470	0	0	0	EG
Growing our Economy	UKSPF	0	33	60	369	237	1,197	732	1,599	0	EG
Growing our Economy	Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA).	0	0	0	100	0	100	0	100	100	EG
Growing our Economy	LUF - Seafront (Phase 3 BH)	600	600	4,000	4,000	0	0	0	0	0	ER/EG
Growing our Economy	Lowestoft Former Post & Sorting Office - Façade refurbishment	186	186	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	EG/ER
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>		<b>5,586</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>15,320</b>	<b>14,363</b>	<b>10,377</b>	<b>8,782</b>	<b>9,842</b>	<b>22,849</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Financed By:-</b>											
<b>Internal Funding:</b>											
Internal Borrowing		0	0	3,000	0	0	2,250	0	8,750	0	
Capital Receipt		600	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Reserve		0	600	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,750</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>External Funding:</b>											
Grants		4,986	1,125	12,320	14,363	10,377	6,532	9,842	14,099	100	
Contributions		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Borrowing		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>4,986</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<b>12,320</b>	<b>14,363</b>	<b>10,377</b>	<b>6,532</b>	<b>9,842</b>	<b>14,099</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>		<b>5,586</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>15,320</b>	<b>14,363</b>	<b>10,377</b>	<b>8,782</b>	<b>9,842</b>	<b>22,849</b>	<b>100</b>	

Project	Description
Towns Fund	Towns Fund Grant investment of £24.9m in projects to regenerate the town, driving economic growth and acting as a catalyst for future investment, rising to £35.9m with the addition of matched funding (subject to ESC business case)
UKSPF	UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds - grant funding will support communities and place, supporting local business and people and skills
Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA).	Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas - grant available for capital projects in conservation areas
LUF - Seafront (Phase 3 BH)	Government Levelling Up Fund to support the continued investment and regeneration of Lowestoft
Lowestoft Former Post & Sorting Office - Façade refurbishment	Restoration of the façade of Lowestoft's former Post Office on London Road North.

**Funding Type Key:**

<b>CR</b> Capital Receipt	<b>EG</b> External Grant
<b>EB</b> External Borrowing	<b>ER</b> Earmarked Reserve
<b>EC</b> External Contribution	<b>IB</b> Internal Borrowing

Strategic Theme	ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & PORT HEALTH	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Delivering Digital Transformation	Port Health	406	647	50	484	50	0	50	0	0	ER
	<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Financed By:-</b>										
	<b>Internal Funding:</b>										
	Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Capital Receipt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Reserve	406	647	50	484	50	0	50	0	0	
		<b>406</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>External Funding:</b>										
	Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

Project	Description
Port Health	Capital expenditure for the function of the Port Health Service

Strategic Theme	FINANCIAL SERVICES	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Enabling our Communities	Romany Lane (previously STTS)	400	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
	<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Financed By:-</b>										
	<b>Internal Funding:</b>										
	Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Capital Receipt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Reserve	400	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>External Funding:</b>										
	Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

Project	Description
Romany Lane (previously STTS)	Remedial and improvement works to the Romany Lane site

Strategic Theme	ICT - Digital & Programme Management	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Delivering Digital Transformation	Corporate IT Requirements	527	527	450	450	250	250	250	250	250	ER
Delivering Digital Transformation	ESSL ICT	400	400	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	ER
	<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	
	<b>Financed By:-</b>										
	<b>Internal Funding:</b>										
	Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Capital Receipt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Reserve	927	927	550	550	250	250	250	250	250	
		<b>927</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	
	<b>External Funding:</b>										
	Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	

Project	Description
Corporate IT Requirements	Corporate refresh of hardware and updating of current systems
ESSL ICT	Purchase of hardware systems for the set up of ESSL



Strategic Theme	OPERATIONS	2022/23 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Funding Type
		Original Budget	Revised Budget	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Original Budget	
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Bath Tap Chalets, Felixstowe	100	100	500	500	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Bawdsey Quay	0	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Brackenbury Beach Hut replacement Handrailing	88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Cemeteries	388	8	0	380	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Caring for our Environment	Cliff House Chalets Felixstowe	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Cliff House, Felixstowe	250	100	750	900	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Clifflands car park, Felixstowe	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	East Point Pavilion	1,216	1,227	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Estates Management	500	720	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Felixstowe Beach Village	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	Felixstowe Garrison Lane Car Park	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Enabling our Communities	Felixstowe Ferry Car Park	100	0	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Felixstowe Lighting	50	50	250	250	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Felixstowe North - Garden Neighbourhood Regeneration Project (Leisure Centre)	0	0	1,000	1,000	16,500	16,500	17,500	17,500	0	EB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Felixstowe North - Garden Neighbourhood Regeneration Project (Leisure Centre Land Purchase & Access Road)	1,000	1,000	5,000	5,000	3,000	3,000	0	0	0	EB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Felixstowe North - Garden Neighbourhood Regeneration Project (Infrastructure)	0	0	0	0	2,000	2,000	4,000	4,000	0	EB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Felixstowe Seafront Gardens Handrailing	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Growing our Economy	Felixstowe South - Public Realm and Martello Tower	0	0	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	Felixstowe Sports Hub	135	135	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Fishing Hut Felixstowe	26	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Footway Lighting Works - Northern (cyclical replacement)	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	ER
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Former Deben High School Felixstowe	350	350	500	500	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Former Deben High School Felixstowe - BC	150	150	2,200	2,200	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	Leisure Centres (South)	87	87	0	500	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	Leisure Centre Lowestoft (Roof)	1,200	1,200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	Leisure Centres - Pool Covers	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Growing our Economy	Lowestoft Beach Hut -replacement Beach Huts	0	400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Growing our Economy	Lowestoft Beach Hut Block 2 to 5	500	500	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Growing our Economy	Lowestoft Victoria Terrace	0	0	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	Lowestoft Boardwalk	48	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Enabling our Communities	Lowestoft - car park enhacment (BCMC)	0	0	0	600	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Lowestoft Industrial Unit	0	750	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Newcombe Road Lowestoft	150	250	2,800	1,900	0	2,000	0	0	0	EB

(continued next page)

Caring for our Environment	Northern Car Park Works	200	200	0	600	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Orford Road Felixstowe Access Ramp	95	162	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Enabling our Communities	Play Areas (District wide)	200	100	200	300	200	200	0	200	200	IB
Caring for our Environment	Public Conveniences Programme	322	625	0	500	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Enabling our Communities	Railway Building - Lowestoft	1,500	32	0	1,700	0	308	0	0	0	EB
Caring for our Environment	Ravine (Jubilee) Bridge	1,000	600	0	400	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Rotterdam Road Roof	0	0	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Rushmere St Andrew Church Wall	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Seafront Gardens Beach Hut Sites & Relocations	495	495	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Southwold Caravan Site redevelopment	40	260	1,600	1,400	0	0	0	0	0	EB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Southwold Enterprise Hub	600	600	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Caring for our Environment	Southwold Harbour Improvements	0	20	0	320	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Caring for our Environment	Southwold Harbour - Pump out station	80	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Southwold Harbour - Visitor Moorings	450	50	0	100	0	900	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Southwold Harbour South Pier	200	200	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	0	0	0	EG
Caring for our Environment	St Marys Church Woodbridge - Wall	144	144	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Governance	Operational Grounds Equipment	100	100	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	ER
Governance	Operational Vehicles/Equipment/Grounds Equipment/Assets	815	915	4,250	5,250	250	1,000	250	500	500	ER/CR
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Barnards Way, Lowestoft	0	250	3,000	2,750	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	Council Offices Leiston	67	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Enabling our Communities	Felixstowe Beach Shower	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Enabling our Communities	Memorial Wall Felixstowe	45	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Caring for our Environment	Woodbridge Model Boat Pond	25	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER

Total Budgeted Expenditure	13,901	13,455	32,205	37,805	30,505	34,463	22,305	22,755	1,255
Financed By:-									
Internal Funding:									
Internal Borrowing	4,205	8,255	10,750	14,500	2,700	2,700	500	700	700
Capital Receipt	400	0	4,000	4,000	0	0	0	0	0
Reserve	5,190	2,231	1,055	2,305	305	1,955	305	555	555
	9,795	10,486	15,805	20,805	3,005	4,655	805	1,255	1,255
External Funding:									
Grants	1,416	1,427	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	0	0	0
Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Borrowing	2,690	1,542	10,400	11,000	21,500	23,808	21,500	21,500	0
	4,106	2,969	16,400	17,000	27,500	29,808	21,500	21,500	0
Total Budgeted Financing	13,901	13,455	32,205	37,805	30,505	34,463	22,305	22,755	1,255

Project	Description
Bath Tap Chalets,	Structural works and refurbishment
Bawdsey Quay	Sewage system, clearance of car park and signage works
Brackenbury Beach Hut replacement Handrailing	Replacement safety railing along concrete terrace for beach huts.
Cemeteries	Provision for Cemetery improvements across the district
Cliff House Chalets	Upgrade of internal and external staircases
Cliff House, Felixstowe	Development of site
Clifflands car park,	Car Park surface replacement
East Point Pavilion	Redevelopment of the East Point Pavilion complex
Estates Management	A planned preventative maintenance list of works required on Council owned properties throughout the district
Felixstowe Beach Village	Construction and development of Felixstowe Beach Village

Felixstowe Ferry Car Park	Enhancement of site and sewage system
Felixstowe Garrison Lane Car Park	Enhancement of site
Felixstowe Lighting	Cyclical replacement of footway lighting
Felixstowe North - Garden Neighbourhood Regeneration Project (Leisure Centre)	Provision of new leisure centre site including purchase of site and access road
Felixstowe North - Garden Neighbourhood Regeneration Project (Infrastructure)	Infrastructure development to enable housing development
Felixstowe Seafront Gardens Handrailing	Installation of handrailing
Felixstowe South - Public Realm and Martello Tower	Development of South Seafront area and Martello Café Felixstowe
Felixstowe Sports Hub	ESC is working with key sports clubs in Felixstowe including, football, cricket, rugby and hockey in order to provide separate hubs in Felixstowe that each sport can develop and grow.
Fishing Hut Felixstowe	Rebuilding of fishing hut next to Felixstowe Pier that burnt down in 2019
Footway Lighting Works - Northern (cyclical)	Cyclical replacement of footway lighting
Former Deben High School Felixstowe	Purchase and development of former school site
Leisure Centres South	Planned preventative maintenance works required to ensure the immediate running of the facility.
Leisure Centre Lowestoft (Roof)	Refurbishment of Leisure Centre roof to enhance the life of the asset and to protect against water ingress
Leisure Centre Pool Covers	Pool covers to increase energy efficiency and reduce loss of heat
Lowestoft Beach Hut - replacement Beach Huts	Installation of beach hut shelf and beach huts
Lowestoft Beach Hut Block 2 to 5	Replacement of beach hut wooden frontage
Lowestoft Beach Hut Block 2 to 5	Replacement of existing beach huts
Lowestoft Victoria Terrace	Works on Victoria Terrace Beach Huts structure
Lowestoft Boardwalk	Seafront boardwalk to enable pedestrian wheeled access to the beach
Lowestoft Car Park	Enhancement works to car park
Lowestoft Industrial Unit	Purchase of site for regeneration
Newcombe Road Lowestoft	Redevelopment of site to provide start up units
Northern Car Park Works	Planned preventative maintenance works
Orford Road Felixstowe Access Ramp	Replacement of disabled access ramp near new café site
Play Areas (District wide)	Upgrade and refurbishment of district wide play areas
Public Conveniences	Upgrade and refurbishment of district wide public conveniences
Railway Building - Lowestoft	Purchase and development of building contained within the Railway site
Ravine Bridge	Structural works and refurbishment works to part owned bridge
Rotterdam Road Roof	Replacement section of Rotterdam Road Depot Roof
Rushmere St Andrew Church	Refurbishment of closed church yard wall
Seafront Gardens Beach Hut Development	Development of Seafront Gardens site for new beach huts
Southwold Caravan Site redevelopment	Refurbishment of existing caravan site
Southwold Enterprise Hub	Capital investment
Southwold Harbour Improvements	Improvements to site
Southwold Harbour - Pump out station	Enhancement of pump out station
Southwold Harbour - Visitor Moorings	Visitor moorings enhancement

Southwold South Pier	Enhancement to the Pier Structure
St Marys Church Woodbridge - Wall	Refurbishment of closed church yard wall
Operational Grounds Equipment	Replacement lawn tractors/mowers
Operational	Purchase of Vehicles for operational use
Barnards Way, Lowestoft	8300m2 of undeveloped ESC land. Develop site for small industrial units including Service delivery of ESC services
Council Offices Leiston	Refurbishment to the fabric of the building to meet H&S requirement and to ensure asset remains watertight
Felixstowe Beach Shower	Installation of outside beach shower
Memorial Wall Felixstowe	Development of new site for a memorial wall as an alternative option than benches. Plaques will be sold to the public to place on the wall.
Woodbridge Model Boat Pond	Refurbishment of model boat pond boundary posts and water treatment system
Wickham Market Churchyard Boundary Wall	Replacement of closed churchyard wall

Strategic Theme	PLANNING & COASTAL MANAGEMENT	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Caring for our Environment	Coast Protection - Minor Capital Works	200	100	200	175	200	175	200	175	175	IB
Caring for our Environment	Corton & North Corton Hybrid Scheme	200	200	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	0	0	0	EG
Caring for our Environment	Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Phase 1 (Tidal Walls, Pluvial & Fluvial)	6,000	6,000	4,000	4,000	0	0	0	0	0	EG
Caring for our Environment	Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Phase 2 (Tidal Gate) *	7,907	7,907	10,809	10,809	29,574	29,574	36,000	36,000	85,710	EG
Caring for our Environment	Southwold Harbour Fender	75	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB/EG
Caring for our Environment	Southwold Harbour North Wall	400	815	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER/IB
Caring for our Environment	Thorpeness (Externally Funded)	3,300	3,300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	EG
Caring for our Environment	Thorpeness Emergency Works	115	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	EC/EG
Caring for our Environment	Resilient Coasts Project	0	0	7,310	7,310	0	0	0	0	0	EG
Caring for our Environment	Pakefield Coastal Emergency works & Resilience project	1,200	1,200	1,790	1,790	0	0	0	0	0	ER/EG
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>		<b>19,432</b>	<b>19,632</b>	<b>31,109</b>	<b>31,084</b>	<b>36,774</b>	<b>36,749</b>	<b>36,200</b>	<b>36,175</b>	<b>85,885</b>	
<b>Financed By:-</b>											
<b>Internal Funding:</b>											
Internal Borrowing		200	700	200	175	200	175	200	175	175	
Capital Receipt Reserve		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		1,100	915	1,790	1,790	0	0	0	0	0	
		1,300	1,615	1,990	1,965	200	175	200	175	175	
<b>External Funding:</b>											
Grants		18,132	18,017	29,119	29,119	36,574	36,574	36,000	36,000	85,710	
Contributions		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Borrowing		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		18,132	18,017	29,119	29,119	36,574	36,574	36,000	36,000	85,710	
<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>		<b>19,432</b>	<b>19,632</b>	<b>31,109</b>	<b>31,084</b>	<b>36,774</b>	<b>36,749</b>	<b>36,200</b>	<b>36,175</b>	<b>85,885</b>	

\* Estimated budget includes inflationary and risk factors with external funding still to be secured

Bawdsey East Lane SMP Review	Review of Coastal processes around East Lane and works required for retaining shingle around Holesley bay
Coast Protection - Minor Capital Works	The Coastal Management Team carries out a comprehensive programme of inspections which highlight when repair and maintenance works need to be carried out. This ensures that the defences are functioning correctly, extends the life of the assets and protects the public from potential hazards.
Corton & North Corton Hybrid Scheme	This item is for ESC contribution to privately funded works to part remove and part rebuild in rock, defences to the north of Corton Village that were abandoned after failure in line with 2010 Shoreline Management Plan policy, plus allow managed realignment to take place to north of village, creating a new beach
Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Phase 1 & 2	A major project to construct a permanent tidal wall which will be built around the harbour to protect Lowestoft from future tidal surges, with a tidal gate located near to the Bascule Bridge to prevent surge water entering Lake Lothing. Including the interim measure of temporary flood barriers
Slaughden Coast/Estuary SMP Policy review	Innovative scheme South of Aldeburgh likely to be delivered by a consortium of public and private partners to provide 20 years of resilience to the town and the Alde & Ore Estuary, offering scope for enhanced / new economic benefits and business opportunities.
Southwold Harbour Fender	Southwold Harbour fender remedial works following damage to the fender which was originally constructed in 1992 as set out in the 3rd November 2020 Cabinet report
Southwold Harbour North Wall Toe	Urgent works needed to the Southwold North seawall to ensure its stability and is not breached.
Thorpeness (Externally Funded)	Strengthen the soft bag defences installed here in 2010/12 that were damaged by unusually high erosion pressure in 2013.
Thorpeness Emergency Works	Installation of a 35-metre rock revetment to protect
Resilient Coast Projects	Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme funded by the Environment Agency
Pakefield Coastal Resilience project	New accelerated project due to rapid increase of coastal erosion.

Strategic Theme	GENERAL FUND - HOUSING	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Enabling our Communities	Disabled Facilities Grant	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	EG
Enabling our Communities	Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	0	0	0	2,690	0	0	0	0	0	EG
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>		<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>3,690</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	
<b>Financed By:-</b>											
<b>Internal Funding:</b>											
Internal Borrowing		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Capital Receipt		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Reserve		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>External Funding:</b>											
Grants		1,000	1,000	1,000	3,690	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	
Contributions		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Borrowing		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		1,000	1,000	1,000	3,690	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	
<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>		<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>3,690</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	

Project	Description
Disabled Facilities Grant	HIA Disabled Facilities Grant works
Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	Central Government General Fund Housing Scheme

Strategic Theme	GENERAL FUND - LONG TERM DEBTORS	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Maintaining Financial Sustainability	LATCO - Loan funding	1,500	1,900	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	IB
	<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Financed By:-</b>										
	<b>Internal Funding:</b>										
	Internal Borrowing	1,500	1,900	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	
	Capital Receipt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>External Funding:</b>										
	Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

Project	Description
LATCO	Loan to the LATCO for investment purposes

Strategic Theme	CENTRAL GOVERNEMENT GRANT FUNDING TO FREEPORT EAST VIA ESC AS ACCOUNTABLE BODY	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Growing our Economy	Harwich	0	0	0	5,600	0	1,400	0	0	0	EG
Growing our Economy	Felixstowe	0	0	0	8,460	0	3,540	0	0	0	EG
Growing our Economy	Gateway 14	0	250	0	5,750	0	0	0	0	0	EG
	<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19,810</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Financed By:-</b>										
	<b>Internal Funding:</b>										
	Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Capital Receipt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>External Funding:</b>										
	Grants	0	250	0	19,810	0	4,940	0	0	0	
	Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		<b>0</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19,810</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19,810</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,940</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

Project	Description
Harwich	Central Government Grant Funding to Freeport East via Principle (East Suffolk Council)
Felixstowe	Central Government Grant Funding to Freeport East via Principle (East Suffolk Council)
Gateway 14	Central Government Grant Funding to Freeport East via Principle (East Suffolk Council)

2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 to 2026/27 £000 Total Budget
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Capital Programme total 43,152 39,936 80,234 112,786 78,956 86,184 70,147 83,029 88,490 410,425

2022/23 to 2026/27 - BUDGET INCREASES ABOVE £1M	Current Budget £000	Revised Budget £000	Variance £000	Funding Type
Towns Fund Historic Quarter	3,210	7,830	4,620	EG
UKSPF	1,029	3,198	2,169	EG
Port Health	556	2,063	1,507	ER
Newcombe Road	2,950	4,150	1,200	EB
LATCO	1,500	6,900	5,400	EB
Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Phase 2 (Tidal Gate)	84,290	170,000	85,710	EG
Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	0	2,690	2,690	
Central Government Grant Funding to Freeport East via ESC as Accountable Body	0	25,000	25,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>93,535</b>	<b>221,831</b>	<b>128,296</b>	

2022/23 to 2026/27 - BUDGET DECREASES ABOVE £100k	Current Budget £000	Revised Budget 2021-22 to 2025-26 £000	Variance £000	Funding Type
Coast Protection - Minor Capital Works budget reprofiled to Southold Toe Wall	800	625	-175	IB
Thorpe Emergency Works	115	0	-115	IB
Disabled Facilities Grant	4,500	4,000	-500	EG
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,415</b>	<b>4,625</b>	<b>- 790</b>	

### General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 New Projects

2022/23 to 2026/27 New Projects	2022/23 £000 Original Budget	2022/23 £000 Revised Budget	2023/24 £000 Original Budget	2023/24 £000 Revised Budget	2024/25 £000 Original Budget	2024/25 £000 Revised Budget	2025/26 £000 Original Budget	2025/26 £000 Revised Budget	2026/27 £000 Original Budget	Funding Type
Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA).	0	0	0	100	0	100	0	100	100	EG
Leisure Centres - Pool Covers	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ER
Lowestoft Victoria Terrace	0	0	0	150	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Lowestoft - car park enhacment (BCMC)	0	0	0	600	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Lowestoft Industrial Unit	0	750	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Rotterdam Road Roof	0	0	0	300	0	0	0	0	0	IB
Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	0	0	0	2,690	0	0	0	0	0	EG
Central Government Grant Funding to Freeport East via Principle (East Suffolk Council)	0	250	0	19,810	0	4,940	0	0	0	EG
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	0	1,120	0	23,650	0	5,040	0	100	100	
<b>Financed By:-</b>										
<b>Internal Funding:</b>										
Internal Borrowing	0	750	0	1,050	0	0	0	0	0	
Capital Receipt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Reserve	0	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	0	870	0	1,050	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>External Funding:</b>										
Grants	0	250	0	22,600	0	5,040	0	100	100	
Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	0	250	0	22,600	0	5,040	0	100	100	
<b>Total Budgeted Financing</b>	0	1,120	0	23,650	0	5,040	0	100	100	



**General Fund Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Extract of Externally Funded Projects**

<b>2022/23 to 2026/27 EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS</b>	<b>Total Budget £000</b>	<b>External Funding £000</b>	<b>ESC Funding £000</b>
Towns Fund - Cultural Quarter (Phase 1)	24,350	14,350	10,000
Towns Fund -Station Quarter (Former Post & Sorting Office)	3,335	2,335	1,000
Towns Fund - Historic Quarter	7,830	7,830	0
Towns Fund - Port Gateway Improvement Project	2,650	2,650	0
Towns Fund - Seafront Vision Delivery	1,270	1,270	0
UKSPF	3,198	3,198	0
Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSiCA).	400	400	0
LUF - Seafront (Phase 3 BH)	4,600	4,000	600
Former Post & Sorting Office - Façade refurbishment	186	186	0
Corton & North Corton Hybrid Scheme	14,200	14,200	0
Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Phase 1 (Tidal Walls, Pluvial & Fluvial)	10,000	10,000	0
Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project Phase 2 (Tidal Gate)	170,000	170,000	0
Thorpeness Flood Defence	3,350	3,350	0
Resilient Coast Project	7,310	7,310	0
Pakefield Coastal Resilience project	2,990	2,290	700
Disabled Facilities Grant	5,000	5,000	0
Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	2,690	2,690	0
Central Government Grant Funding to Freeport East via ESC as Accountable Body	25,000	25,000	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>263,359</b>	<b>251,059</b>	<b>12,300</b>

**HRA Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 Summary**

<b>SUMMARY -HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>2022/23 £000 Original Budget</b>	<b>2022/23 £000 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2023/24 £000 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2024/25 £000 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2025/26 £000 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 £000 Revised Budget</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>							
Housing Repairs	6,640	2,109	9,905	3,040	3,040	3,040	21,134
Housing Project Development	3,875	3,212	8,107	4,350	2,650	2,650	20,969
New Build Programme	14,128	1,318	15,929	9,282	7,000	7,000	40,529
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>24,643</b>	<b>6,639</b>	<b>33,941</b>	<b>16,672</b>	<b>12,690</b>	<b>12,690</b>	<b>82,632</b>
<b>Financed By:-</b>							
HRA DRF	5,863	1,186	3,521	2,137	1,800	3,700	12,344
Capital Receipt	0	0	10,552	5,863	2,910	7,190	26,515
Contributions	0	0	295	0	0	0	295
Grants	1,248	0	1,148	550	1,000	0	2,698
Reserves	17,532	5,453	18,425	8,122	6,980	1,800	40,780
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>24,643</b>	<b>6,639</b>	<b>33,941</b>	<b>16,672</b>	<b>12,690</b>	<b>12,690</b>	<b>82,632</b>

**HRA Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27**

<b>HOUSING REPAIRS</b>	<b>2022/23 £000 Original</b>	<b>2022/23 £000 Revised</b>	<b>2023/24 £000 Revised</b>	<b>2024/25 £000 Revised</b>	<b>2025/26 £000 Revised</b>	<b>2026/27 £000 Revised</b>
Bathrooms	100	200	200	200	200	200
Central Heating/Boilers	500	350	500	500	500	500
Demolition - Garages	0	160	100	50	50	50
Disabled Works	180	180	180	180	180	180
Door entry system & doors - Park Rd & The Hemplands	0	0	100	0	0	0
Energy Efficiencies Work	200	100	500	500	500	500
Environmental Works	10	1	10	10	10	10
External Doors	20	10	20	20	20	20
Heat Metering	100	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Repair Vans	550	0	500	210	210	210
Kitchens - Programmed & Responsive	650	410	650	650	650	650
Re-Roofing	450	250	450	450	450	450
Rewiring	250	300	250	250	250	250
St Peters Court - Replacement Doors	0	0	276	0	0	0
St Peters Court - Fire Risk Assessment	50	0	378	0	0	0
St Peters Court - Internal Dec's	200	0	52	0	0	0
St Peters Court - Lift	300	0	600	0	0	0
St Peters Court - Open Reach	60	0	0	0	0	0
St Peters Court - Remove Cladding & Change windows	3,000	140	4,846	0	0	0
St Peters Court - Shed area	0	0	50	0	0	0
St Peters Court - Sprinkler System	0	0	223	0	0	0
Windows	20	8	20	20	20	20
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>6,640</b>	<b>2,109</b>	<b>9,905</b>	<b>3,040</b>	<b>3,040</b>	<b>3,040</b>
<b>Financed By :-</b>						
Housing Capital Receipt	0	0	660	210	210	210
Housing Revenue Account	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Revenue Account Reserves	6,640	2,109	9,245	2,830	2,830	2,830
	<b>6,640</b>	<b>2,109</b>	<b>9,905</b>	<b>3,040</b>	<b>3,040</b>	<b>3,040</b>

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
Bathrooms	Replacement and improvements to bathrooms and layouts to the housing stock.
Central Heating/Boilers	A rolling programme has been established which provides replacement heating appliances, boilers and installation of full heating systems to the housing stock.
Demolition - Garage	Demolition of garages and construction of parking area
Disabled Works	These works provide disabled adaptations to the Council's housing stock to improve the living conditions of tenants, for example, the installation of flush floor showers, stairlifts etc.
Door Entry System - Park Road & The Hemplands	New door entry system
Energy Efficiency Works	flats to reduce energy consumption, more efficient heating systems, installation of over bath showers to reduce water usage etc.
Environmental Works	Works controlled by tenants for environmental improvements, examples could be additional estate parking, communal play improvements etc.
External Doors	A rolling programme provides replacement doors to the housing stock.
Heat Metering	Works to be compliant with the Heat metering network regulations. Every communal system should have individual meters within each property to allow residents to know their specific usage.
Housing Repair Vans	Cyclical renewal of Housing vans
Kitchens - Programmed & Responsive	Replacement and improvements to kitchens and layouts to the housing stock.
Re-Roofing	A rolling programme provides replacement roofs to the housing stock.
Rewiring	Rewiring to the housing stock.
St Peters Court - Replacement Doors	Replacement door programme
St Peters Court - Fire Assessment	Fire Assessment of the St Peters Court tower block
St Peters Court - Internal Dec's	Repair and renew internal services including redcoration
St Peters Court - Lift	Replacement of St Peters Court Lift
St Peters Court - Openreach	Removal of old telecommunications wiring (H&S)
St Peters Court - Remove Cladding & Change	Removal of cladding and replacement of windows
St Peters Court - Shed area	Enhancement of shed area
St Peters Court - Sprinkler System	Installation of sprinkler system
Windows	A rolling programme provides replacement windows to the housing stock.

HOUSING PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	2022/23 £000 Original	2022/23 £000 Revised	2023/24 £000 Revised	2024/25 £000 Revised	2025/26 £000 Revised	2026/27 £000 Revised
<b>Projects</b>						
New accommodation Project	0	0	2,500	0	0	0
Consultancy Compliance requirements	400	2,000	600	0	0	0
Avenue Mansions	0	0	0	1,000	0	0
<b>Redevelopment Programme</b>						
Reconversions	260	260	150	150	150	150
Retrofitting	1,800	0	2,400	2,700	1,000	1,000
Expenditure on Housing Acquisitions	500	750	100	500	500	500
Expenditure on Housing Redevelopment	915	202	3,357	0	1,000	1,000
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>3,875</b>	<b>3,212</b>	<b>9,107</b>	<b>4,350</b>	<b>2,650</b>	<b>2,650</b>
<b>Financed By :-</b>						
Housing Capital Reciept	0	417	1,936	450	200	200
Housing Revenue Account	1,049	535	1,365	300	300	300
Housing Revenue Account Reserves	2,766	2,260	5,806	3,600	2,150	2,150
External Funding	60	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>3,875</b>	<b>3,212</b>	<b>9,107</b>	<b>4,350</b>	<b>2,650</b>	<b>2,650</b>

Project	Description
New Office Accommodation	Provision for alternative depot office accommodation.
Consultancy Compliance requirements	Repairs & Maintenance Projects to be identified

NEW BUILD PROGRAMME	2022/23 £000 Original	2022/23 £000 Revised	2023/24 £000 Revised	2024/25 £000 Revised	2025/26 £000 Revised	2026/27 £000 Revised
New Builds	14,128	1,318	15,929	9,282	7,000	7,000
<b>Total Budgeted Expenditure</b>	<b>14,128</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>15,929</b>	<b>9,282</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>7,000</b>
<b>Financed By :-</b>						
Housing Capital Reciept	0	433	7,957	0	4,500	3,600
Housing External Grant	0	0	1,148	0	1,000	0
Housing Revenue Account	4,814	651	3,155	2,087	1,500	3,400
Housing Revenue Account Reserves	8,126	234	3,374	6,895	0	0
External Funding	1,188	0	295	300	0	0
	<b>14,128</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>15,929</b>	<b>9,282</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>7,000</b>

Project	Description
New Builds	Provision of new housing

<b>Programme Total</b>	<b>24,643</b>	<b>6,639</b>	<b>34,941</b>	<b>15,672</b>	<b>12,690</b>	<b>12,690</b>
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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PRE-MEETING QUESTIONS SUBMITTED**

**Questions Received from the Scrutiny Committee ahead of the meeting on 19 January 2023**

Please note – page, section and figures referred to in the questions below relate to the report presented to Cabinet on 3 January 2023.

**Capital Programme Report**

- 1. P243Aa capital investment in Southwold Enterprise Hub of £600k – where will the MRP come from? Can I see a business plan? What security does ESC have on the project?**

The ESC £600,000 investment into the Southwold Enterprise Hub represents c20% of the project build cost. The security for ESC is a 20% ownership stake in the Enterprise Hub and the right to receive 20% of the rent. STC will have the right after 5 years and in perpetuity to buy out ESC.

The Business Plan was included in the Southwold Enterprise Hub Report to Cabinet on 7 June 2022. Please note this report was an Exempt item (Item 16).

MRP is an annual charge included within the centralised revenue budgets and charged over the accounting asset life.

- 2. P252 Appendix G How many new houses were built for £15m?**

Appendix G Shows an original budget of £14.1 million for 22/23 revised down to £1.3 million due to delays in the new build programme. It also shows a budget of £15.9 million for 23/24. These properties have not yet been built, and the spend can relate to projects that span over more than one financial year. £8 million of the £15.9 million relates to developments that will be completed in 24/25 and 25/26, providing 61 new homes.

The remaining £7.9 million will deliver 44 new homes in 23/24. The total cost spanning over several financial years for the developments included in the £15.9 million is £27.744 million, which will provide 105 new homes, giving an average build cost of £264k per property. However, this does include a passivehaus development which is more expensive than a traditional build.

Extract from Unconfirmed Minutes of Scrutiny Committee 19 January 2023  
Item 5 – Capital Programme 2022-23 to 2026-27

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Thursday, 19 January 2023 at 6.30pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Mick Richardson

**Officers present:** Chris Bally (Chief Executive), Ben Bix (Democratic Services Officer), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Brian Mew (Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Isobel Rolfe (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Julian Sturman (Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management), Heather Tucker (Head of Housing), Amber Welham (Finance Business Partner – Housing), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

**5 Capital Programme 2022-23 to 2026-27**

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, Councillor Cook introduced report **ES/1418** and in so doing explained that the Council was required to agree a programme of capital expenditure for the coming four years as part of the annual budget setting process. The capital programme had been compiled and took account of the following main principles, to:

- Maintain an affordable four-year rolling capital programme
- Ensure capital resources are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan
- Maximise available resources by actively seeking external funding and disposal of surplus assets; and
- Not to anticipate receipts from disposals until they were realised.

The General Fund capital programme included £260m of external contributions and grants towards financing the Council's £383m of capital investment for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period. This represented 68% of the whole General Fund capital

programme. The Housing Revenue Account capital programme totalled £83m for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period and would benefit from £3m of external grants and contributions, which was 4% of the programme.

Councillor Cook emphasised that all capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (Government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves, and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing and leasing). Debt was only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and therefore be replaced over time by other financing, usually from Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets could be used to replace debt finance. The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance was measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). That would increase with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP. The CFR was expected to increase by £72m between 2022/23 and 2026/27 due to capital projects potentially being financed through borrowing. Statutory guidance set out that debt should remain below the CFR. The programme as presented did not pre-empt the realisation of any future capital receipts. External funding was expected to be secured in respect of other major projects in the Programme, assisting the overall position and the ability of the Council to deliver on its Strategic Plan.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Cook for his introduction and invited questions from Members. Councillor Coulam noted the decline in public conveniences around Lowestoft Town Centre and queried whether there was provision in the budget to address that decline.

The Cabinet Member and the Chief Finance Officer reminded Members that many of the public conveniences in Lowestoft were actually owned by the Town Council; however, there was provision within the Asset Management Plan for repair and maintenance of those assets owned by the East Suffolk Council.

Councillor Beavan queried the value for money of the Southwold Enterprise Hub. There had been an objective for the income to the Council to match short term interest rate income, but the income to the Council was now estimated to be lower than this. The Strategic Director reminded the Committee that the Southwold Enterprise Hub was originally proposed by the Town Council for business support provision and diversification, and not as a profit-making development for East Suffolk Council. The security for East Suffolk Council was a 20% ownership stake in the Enterprise Hub and the right to receive 20% of the rent. The Town Council retained a right to buy-out the District Council's stake in the development.

Councillor Beavan sought clarification of the number of housing completions that had been achieved in 2022/23 and the reasons why the budget for new builds shown in Appendix G had been revised from £14.1m to £1.3m for 2022/23. The Strategic Director acknowledged that there had been delays in the new build programme and consequentially the properties had not yet been built. The Committee heard that projects would span over more than one financial year. For example, £8m of the £15.9m allocated in 2023/24 related to developments that would be completed in 2024/25 and 2025/26, providing 61 new homes. Members had also previously requested an exemplar Passivhaus development which would be more expensive than a traditional build. It was emphasised that the annual number of completions would vary, and illustratively the forthcoming South of Lake Lothing development could deliver between 300 and 400 new dwellings. Consequently, the Chairman requested that a table setting out the projected

annual number of Council-led completions be provided to the Committee as a Matter Arising.

In response to further questions from the Chairman, Councillors Topping, Lynch and Goldson, officers clarified that:

- The acronym 'ER' meant Earmarked Reserves. In recent years, Cabinet had earmarked reserves for specific capital projects brought forward by Officers, for example the Sports Hub and the Memorial Wall in Felixstowe.
- Earmarked Reserves were a method to recognise future spending need and to then build up funds for these specific purposes
- East Suffolk Council owned the Town Council Offices in Leiston, which were leased to Leiston Town Council
- Where projects had identified external funding, if that was not secured then those projects would look to secure other funding or would not be pursued
- Unspent disabled facilities grant funding would be rolled over to future years, with no penalty
- The £2.29m external funding support for the Pakefield Coastal Resilience Project would be spent in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan previously approved by the Council
- The Council had spent £120,000 on swimming pool covers as part of its mitigation of rising energy costs and to keep increases in management fees to a minimum. The Council had acted swiftly to procure the covers, and there was now a shortage of covers as other leisure providers had sought the same covers
- A decarbonisation report would be forthcoming to Cabinet which would include options relating to solar panels, as part of the consideration of renewable energy sources for Council owned property assets

The Chairman concurred with Councillor Lynch that it would be helpful to understand the anticipated and if possible actual saving from the installation of swimming pool covers as a Matter Arising to report to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Gooch advised Officers of a typographical error on page 18 of the report where £40.66m had been incorrectly presented as £40.66. Further, on page 32 of the report there were words omitted after *examples could be additional...* the Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management explained that the words that were not displayed correctly were *...ground source heat pumps and efficiency measures*. Turning to the General Fund Capital Programme table set out at Appendix A, Councillor Gooch sought clarification of why the Environment and Port Health expenditure line appeared erratic over future years. The Specialist Accountant – Capital and Treasury Management clarified that a new system was being introduced and the budget was profiled to account for that in the first two years and easing thereafter.

Councillor Topping asked why only £140,000 of the £3m allocated to refurbish St Peters Court in Lowestoft had been spent. The Strategic Director explained that the initial spend was for intrusive surveys, fire risk matters, and windows. A sprinkler system and fire doors had been installed promptly and budgeted for works would continue.



The Chairman invited the Committee to debate the report. There being no debate, the Chairman moved to approve the recommendations set out in the report, seconded by Councillor Lynch. A vote was taken, and it was by a majority

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Cabinet**

1. The General Fund capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 including revisions as shown in Appendix B
2. The Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 including revisions as shown in Appendix G



**FULL COUNCIL**

**Wednesday, 22 February 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER AND SECTION 151 OFFICER
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Steve Gallant Leader of the Council
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Chris Bally Chief Executive chris.bally@eastssuffolk.gov.uk 01502 523210

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

Local authorities are required to have in place certain statutory officers, one of which is the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer who undertakes a range of key financial responsibilities. The current postholder, Mr Brian Mew, has given notice that he intends to retire on 31 March 2023, and it is proposed that the Council's current Deputy Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Section 151 Officer, Mrs Lorraine Rogers, steps into the role for six months from 31 March 2022 pending the appointment of a permanent replacement.

### **Options:**

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint one of their officers to have responsibility for the administration of those affairs. The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is one of three statutory roles which the Council must have in place, the others being the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer. Since the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is a statutory role, the Council has no option but to ensure the role is filled. The proposed temporary arrangement to cover this post will ensure a smooth transition of any outstanding matters being dealt with by the current postholder at his point of departure.

### **Recommendation:**

That the temporary appointment of Mrs Lorraine Rogers to the post of Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer until a permanent replacement is recruited be approved.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council which includes ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of the Council's decision-making, the administration of its financial affairs, contributing to the corporate management of the Council and the provision of financial information and advice. The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is therefore integral to the day to day operation of the Council as well as being a statutory officer.

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

The Council's Constitution refers to the role and remit of the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer.

### **Environmental:**

No impact.

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

The postholder ensures that the Council remains financially viable and has a fully sustainable funding position in order to be able to provide a full and effective range of services to all communities across the district.
<b>Financial:</b> The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Council meets legislative requirements and adheres to the Finance Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution.
<b>Human Resources:</b> No impact.
<b>ICT:</b> No impact.
<b>Legal:</b> The Council is required to appoint a Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
<b>Risk:</b> Failure to appoint a Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer would be contrary to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Constitution.

<b>External Consultees:</b>	None
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b>  The postholder is responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council which includes ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of the Council's decision-making, the administration of financial affairs, contributing to the corporate management of the Council and the provision of financial information and advice. In essence, the postholder is responsible for ensuring the Council remains financially viable and able to deliver effective services to all of its communities across the district.			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

<b>1</b>	<b>Background facts</b>		
1.1	The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer role is a statutory requirement in accordance with the legislation referred to above.		
<b>2</b>	<b>Current position</b>		
2.1	The current postholder has given notice of his intention to retire on 31 March 2023. In view of this, arrangements must be made to cover the role until a permanent replacement can be found.		
<b>3</b>	<b>How to address current situation</b>		
3.1	Mrs Lorraine Rogers is the Council's Deputy Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Section 151 Officer and has worked for East Suffolk Council and its predecessor councils for 25 years. She works closely with the current postholder and is well qualified, with extensive knowledge of the Council and its procedures as well as being a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.		
3.2	Since the Council is approaching its financial year end, it is proposed that the recruitment process begins once the usual frenetic year end procedures have calmed. It is envisaged that a new postholder will be recruited within the next six months.		

4 Reason/s for recommendation	
4.1	The appointment of a Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is a statutory requirement and the proposal contained within this report will ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation.
4.2	By utilising the experience of an existing officer who has held the role as a Deputy for a number of years, represents the best use of resources and will enable a smooth transition.

## Appendices

Appendices:
None

Background reference papers:
None



**FULL COUNCIL**

**Wednesday, 22 February 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Halesworth and Oulton Neighbourhood Plans
<b>Report of</b>	Councillor David Ritchie  Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
<b>Supporting Officers</b>	Dickon Povey Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery) <a href="mailto:dickon.povey@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">dickon.povey@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> (01502) 523043  Ruth Bishop Senior Planner (Policy and Delivery) <a href="mailto:Ruth.bishop@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">Ruth.bishop@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> (01502) 523028  Melanie Seabrook Planner (Policy and Delivery) <a href="mailto:melanie.seabrook@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">melanie.seabrook@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> (01502) 523030

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Halesworth & Blything Oulton Broad

## Purpose and high-level overview

### **Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of this Report is to “make” the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan and the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for East Suffolk following positive results of the Referendums on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. Part of the Oulton neighbourhood areas fall within the Broads Authority area. The Referendum questions asked:

*“Do you want East Suffolk Council to use the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?” and,*

*“Do you want the Broads Authority and East Suffolk Council to use the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan to help them decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area?”*

More than 50% of those voting in each Referendums voted “YES” to the question and East Suffolk Council (and the Broads Authority for the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan) must now “make” the Neighbourhood Plan, unless it considers the Neighbourhood Plan would breach or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights.

Once “made” by East Suffolk Council, the Neighbourhood Plans will become part of the Development Plan for East Suffolk and sit alongside the adopted East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan. The Development Plan is used to determine planning applications. The Broads Authority will take their own decision to make the neighbourhood plan at the Broads Authority meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

### **Options:**

None. Neighbourhood planning Regulations state that the Council must make the plans within eight weeks of the day after the referendum, unless it considers the Neighbourhood Plan would breach or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights. No breaches or incompatibilities have been identified, therefore there are no alternative options available to the Council.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Council make the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum version, February 2023) and the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version, December 2022) part of the statutory Development Plan for East Suffolk for the whole of the Halesworth Neighbourhood Area and the part of the Oulton Neighbourhood Area within East Suffolk.



## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

Once made, the Neighbourhood Plans will form part of the development plan and will be a statutory consideration in determining planning applications in the East Suffolk parts of the Neighbourhood Areas.

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

The Neighbourhood Plans are in general conformity with the relevant strategies of the East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan. This is something the Neighbourhood Plans have been tested against at Examination.

### **Environmental:**

Individual policies in the Neighbourhood Plans contribute to achieving objectives in relation to the natural environment which will support the delivery of the Environment priorities in the Strategic Plan. For example, the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan includes policies which protect local green spaces; support the provision of a new nature reserve; support the retention green verges and enhancement of their biodiversity; seek to preserve heritage trees; support low energy and energy efficient housing design; and preserve important views.

The Oulton Neighbourhood Plan contains policies which support new planting and landscaping as part of new developments; support sustainable design; safeguard green corridors; protect local green spaces; protect important views; and preserve a special character area.

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

An Equality Impact Assessment (ref: EQIA484450294) has been carried out for the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan. Minor positive impacts were identified with respect to the protected characteristics of age and deprivation/socio-economic disadvantage. No negative impacts on those with protected characteristics were identified and no mitigating actions were identified/required.

Equality Impact Assessment (ref: EQIA484477198) has been carried out for the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan. Minor positive impacts were identified with respect to the protected characteristics of age and disability. No negative impacts on those with protected characteristics were identified and no mitigating actions were identified/required.

### **Financial:**

In accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations, Parish/Town Councils with a made neighbourhood plan in place will receive 25% of CIL receipts from liable development schemes permitted after the neighbourhood plan is made. For towns and parishes with no made Neighbourhood Plan, they will receive 15% of CIL receipts (further details on CIL can be found via the following link:

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/community-infrastructure-levy/>). East Suffolk Council is entitled to Neighbourhood Planning Grant of £20,000 from the Government for each of the two Neighbourhood Plans.

### **Human Resources:**

No impacts.

<b>ICT:</b>
No impacts
<b>Legal:</b>
A legal challenge can be made in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Council declining to make a Neighbourhood Plan which has been successful at referendum within eight weeks. (Unless agreed with the qualifying body or if the plan is considered to breach the EU obligations or convention rights). Proceedings must be brought within six weeks of the day the decision is published.</li> <li>b) The conduct of the referendum. Proceedings must be brought by a claim for judicial review filed within six weeks beginning the day on which the results are published.</li> </ul>
<b>Risk:</b>
There are no anticipated risks in relation to the implementation of the recommendation.

<b>External Consultees:</b>	Both of the neighbourhood plans have been subject to extensive consultation throughout the course of their preparation. This has included consultation with the community as a whole; statutory consultees; and a broad range of other interested parties. Details of the consultation processes can be found in the respective Consultation Statements in the Background Reference Papers
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		

P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**How does this proposal support the priorities selected?**

Both of the neighbourhood plans include the respective community's vision and set out how this will be delivered. This supports P09 'Community Pride' by promoting involvement, participation and positive action in the respective communities and delivering their collective vision and objectives.

P01 'Build the Right Environment for Suffolk' is directly supported by enabling an inclusive approach to shaping communities, set out in each neighbourhood plan. In turn, these will positively promote the delivery of the Council's strategies for growth and place making. The Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy supporting provision of a proportion of larger homes to meet local needs; shape housing developments of 10 dwellings or less; and support low energy and energy efficient housing design. The Oulton Neighbourhood Plan includes policies to guide housing type and mix and Affordable Housing tenure to meet local requirements.

The Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan promotes tourism and creative industries; guides major development opportunities; seeks to enhance Halesworth town centre; and allocates areas of land for employment use and supports small-scale commercial workspace. These all contribute to meeting P01 and P03 in the 'Growing our Economy' section.

P05 'Support and Deliver Infrastructure' and P06 'Community Partnerships' are supported in the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan by setting out an action for the or Community Infrastructure Levy funds to improve the quality of play areas in Halesworth.

The neighbourhood plans are both excellent examples of community-led planning which directly supports P07 'Taking Positive Action on What Matters Most'. Neighbourhood plans enable communities to plan and responding to meet their own needs. The housing policies mentioned in connection with P01 will provide housing in a manner directly shaped by the community.

Supporting and delivering neighbourhood plans means the Council is eligible for £20,000 of Neighbourhood Planning Grant from the Government for each neighbourhood plan. This supports priority P13 'Optimising our Financial Investments and Grant Opportunities'

The neighbourhood plans contain a range of policies which promote protection and enhancement of the environment in terms of local green spaces; green corridors; protecting heritage trees; and improving biodiversity amongst others. Making the neighbourhood plans will support priority P23 'Protection, Education and Influence' by

using the Council's policy-making function to enable communities to achieve a cleaner and healthier environment.

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	<p>Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act in 2011. They allow communities to write their own plan containing planning policies which, once 'made', form part of the development plan and are used alongside the East Suffolk Local Plans and national planning policy. Consideration of the development plan is a statutory element of determining planning applications. Neighbourhood plans also commonly include non-policy actions which reflect the community's aspirations but are not suitable as planning policies. More information on each plan is included below and full versions can be found in the Appendices.</p>
1.2	<p>Halesworth Town Council and Oulton Parish Council have each taken up the opportunity to produce a neighbourhood plan for their community. The plans have been developed by the community with the Parish and Town Councils being the 'Qualifying Body'. The plans have been through several stages of consultation, including statutory consultations, and an Examination carried out by an independent examiner. The Examiners recommended that each neighbourhood plan proceed to a Referendum.</p> <p>The Referendums took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. The questions asked at the Referendums were: <i>"Do you want East Suffolk Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Halesworth to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"</i>, and <i>"Do you want the Broads Authority and East Suffolk Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Oulton to help them decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"</i> The questions were slightly different due to part of the Oulton neighbourhood area falling within the Broads Authority area.</p> <p>For the Halesworth neighbourhood plan, 739 people voted 'yes' and 136 people voted 'no'. The referendum outcome was therefore <b>positive</b>. The turnout was 21.7%.</p> <p>For the Oulton neighbourhood plan, 457 people voted 'yes' and 78 people voted 'no'. The referendum outcome was therefore <b>positive</b>. The turnout was 13.7%.</p>
1.3	<p>The neighbourhood plans will become formally part of the Development Plan for East Suffolk once they are made. East Suffolk Council is required to make the Neighbourhood Plans within 8 weeks of the day following the Referendum, unless it considers that this would breach, or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention of Rights. No such breaches or incompatibilities have been identified for the Neighbourhood Plans. The Broads Authority are also required to make the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan and they will take this decision at the Broads Authority meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March.</p>

1.4	<p>Areas with a made neighbourhood plan benefit from a greater proportion of the 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) where this is payable. The CIL is a tariff paid by liable forms of development and it is calculated using the development's floor area. CIL is paid to the Council by the developer. A proportion of this money is then paid directly to the Parish or Town Council on a bi-annual basis. Parish or Town Councils receive 25% of CIL receipts where there is a made Neighbourhood Plan in place, or 15% without. The CIL regulations apply a cap to the annual amount of CIL transferred to Parish or Town Councils where there is no neighbourhood plan in place. It is capped at £100 per dwelling (indexed for inflation). There is no cap on the 25% transferred when a made neighbourhood plan is in place.</p>
1.5	<p>The neighbourhood area for the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan covers the entire Parish of Halesworth. The plan addresses a wide range of topics which are important to the local community. Planning policies in the plan relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting green spaces and open spaces</li> <li>• Protecting and enhancing biodiversity</li> <li>• Supporting homes to meet local needs</li> <li>• Commercial workspaces and employment areas</li> <li>• Supporting tourism and creative industries</li> <li>• Protecting important views and non-designated heritage assets</li> <li>• Delivering high quality design</li> <li>• Improving routes for pedestrians and cyclists</li> <li>• Supporting cycle parking proposals and electric car charging points</li> <li>• Enhancing the town centre</li> </ul>
1.6	<p>The neighbourhood area for the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan covers the entire Parish of Oulton, part of which falls within the Broads Authority area. The plan addresses a wide range of locally important topics and contains planning policies relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping homes to meet local needs</li> <li>• Delivering high quality design</li> <li>• Safeguarding local green spaces and green corridors</li> <li>• Protecting important views and a special character area</li> <li>• Providing sustainable transport</li> <li>• Protecting non-designated heritage assets</li> </ul>
1.7	<p>Halesworth Town Council and Oulton Parish Council engaged with their local communities in producing their plans. This process is documented in their Consultation Statements (see Background Reference Papers). Following this, the neighbourhood plans were submitted to East Suffolk Council (and the Broads Authority in the case of the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan). East Suffolk Council then publicised the plans and invited comments. For the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan this took place over the period of 22<sup>nd</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022. For the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan this took place between 13<sup>th</sup> May and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Following these periods of publicity, East Suffolk Council, with the agreement of the Parish/Town Council (and the Broads Authority for the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan), appointed an independent Examiner to examine the neighbourhood plans. The role of the Examiner is to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets the relevant</p>

	<p>legislative and procedural requirements. Testing against the ‘Basic Conditions’ set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is the main element of this.</p> <p>Andrew Ashcroft BA (Hons) M.A. DMS M.R.T.P.I. was appointed to examine the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan. He issued his Report in November 2022 (see Background Reference Papers) and concluded that subject to modifications the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to Referendum.</p> <p>Christopher Lockhart-Mummery KC was appointed to examine the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan. He issued his report in September 2022 (see Background Reference Papers) and also concluded that subject to modifications the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to Referendum.</p> <p>In each case the examiner concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan was compatible with European Obligations and the European Convention on Human Rights.</p>
1.8	<p>With agreement from the Parish and Town Councils, East Suffolk Council (using powers delegated to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management) (and the Broads Authority for the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan) considered and agreed each of the examiner’s recommended modifications. This is set out in the Decision Statements for each neighbourhood plan (see Background Reference Papers). These were both published in December 2022. The Referendums were then held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 and, as covered above, both Neighbourhood Plans were successful.</p>

## 2 Current position

2.1	<p>the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan and the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan have both successfully passed their Referendums on 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Legislation states that the Council must make a Neighbourhood Plan within 8 weeks of the day after a successful Referendum, unless it considers that this would breach or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention of Rights.</p>
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## 3 How to address current situation

3.1	<p>The Council should make the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan and the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
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## 4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	<p>Following a successful Referendum, the Council must make a Neighbourhood Plan within 8 weeks of the day following the Referendum unless it considers that this would breach or be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention of Rights. There are no indications of breaches or compatibility issues therefore the Council must make the Neighbourhood Plans.</p>
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## Appendices

### Appendices:

<b>Appendix A</b>	Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version February 2023)
<b>Appendix B</b>	Oulton Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version December 2022)

### Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
February 2022	Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement	<a href="https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Halesworth/Halesworth-Consultation-Statement-without-Appendices-Final.pdf">https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Halesworth/Halesworth-Consultation-Statement-without-Appendices-Final.pdf</a>
November 2022	Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report	<a href="https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Halesworth/Halesworth-Neighbourhood-Development-Plan-examiners-report.pdf">https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Halesworth/Halesworth-Neighbourhood-Development-Plan-examiners-report.pdf</a>
December 2022	Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement	<a href="https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Halesworth/East-Suffolk-Council-Decision-Statement.pdf">https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Halesworth/East-Suffolk-Council-Decision-Statement.pdf</a>
February 2022	Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement	<a href="https://eastsuffolk.inconsult.uk/gf2.ti/f/1403234/133468325.1/PDF/-/Consultation%20Statement.pdf">https://eastsuffolk.inconsult.uk/gf2.ti/f/1403234/133468325.1/PDF/-/Consultation%20Statement.pdf</a>
September 2022	Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report	<a href="https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Oulton/Examiners-Report.pdf">https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Oulton/Examiners-Report.pdf</a>
December 2022	Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement	<a href="https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Oulton/Oulton-Neighbourhood-Plan-Decision-Statement.pdf">https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Oulton/Oulton-Neighbourhood-Plan-Decision-Statement.pdf</a>



# HALESWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Agenda Item 13

ES/1461

## PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

2021 to 2036

### Referendum Version February 2023



Neighbourhood Plan Group



HALESWORTH  
TOWN COUNCIL



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## List of policies

Policy HAL.ENV1: Local green spaces  
Policy HAL.ENV2: Protection of open spaces  
Policy HAL.ENV3: New nature reserve  
Policy HAL.ENV4: Verges  
Policy HAL.ENV5: Heritage trees  
Policy HAL.HSG1: Provision of large family housing  
Policy HAL.HSG2: Small housing sites  
Policy HAL.HSG3: Low energy and energy efficient housing design  
Policy HAL.ED1: Small-scale commercial workspaces and micro employment areas  
Policy HAL.ED2: Tourism and creative industries  
Policy HAL.ED3: Major development opportunities  
Policy HAL.COM1: Play facilities  
Policy HAL.DH1: Design  
Policy HAL.DH2: Views and gateways into and out of Halesworth town  
Policy HAL.DH3: Non-designated heritage assets  
Policy HAL.TM1: Key movement routes  
Policy HAL.TM2: Cycle parking  
Policy HAL.TM3: Residential electric car charging  
Policy HAL.TC1: Enhancing Halesworth town centre

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

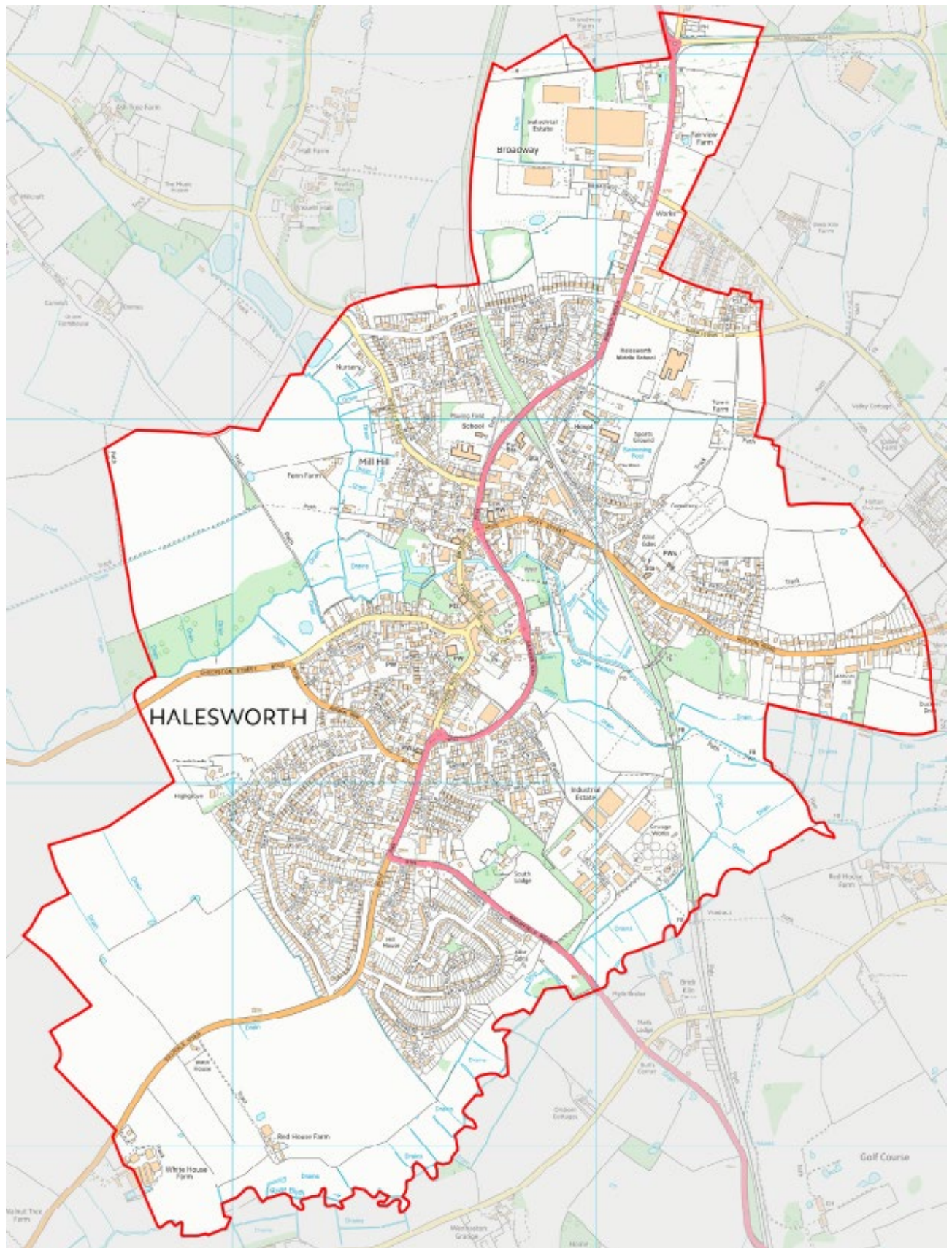
## **Purpose of the plan**

- 1.1 This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for the town of Halesworth for the period 2021 to 2036. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Halesworth and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.
- 1.2 The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the town. It also provides guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the town. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Halesworth, its residents, businesses and community groups. It should be noted that planning applications are submitted to and determined by East Suffolk Council. However, the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and therefore is given equal weight to the relevant Local Plan in the decision-making process.
- 1.3 Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, East Suffolk Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.
- 1.4 The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of actions which have not been included in the policies' sections. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. These actions will be addressed by the Town Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

## **Policy context**

- 1.5 Along with national planning policy, the Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2021 to 2036, the other part being the Waveney Local Plan (2019).

**Figure 1.1: Halesworth neighbourhood plan area**



- 1.6 East Suffolk Council, as the relevant local planning authority, designated the Halesworth Neighbourhood Area in May 2018 to enable Halesworth Town Council to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) Steering Group.
- 1.7 The HNP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The HNP Steering Group has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the town and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period.
- 1.8 The map in Figure 1.1 shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Halesworth parish.
- 1.9 The Vision in the Waveney Local Plan, which allocates a significant proportion of growth in the area, has informed the Neighbourhood Plan and aligns with many of its objectives. In particular it envisages Halesworth playing a more significant role as a service centre to the surrounding villages. Its vision is that the town centre will be vibrant and will have been supported by new housing and retail development. The town will have enhanced sports and leisure facilities following the completion of the Halesworth Campus and improved facilities at Dairy Hill together with additional health facilities and an enhanced employment offer. This will have helped attract younger people and families to the town. The separate identities of Halesworth and Holton and the sensitive landscape surrounding them will have been respected.
- 1.10 The strategy for Halesworth and Holton is for a total of approximately 762 new dwellings over the period 2014 to 2036. In particular, this is to be delivered through the allocation of the Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood for 215 dwellings along with a residential care facility and retirement apartments offering extra care, sports facilities (including a full size pitch and all weather 3G pitch outside as well as indoor sports facilities), replacement of the Apollo Youth Club and retention of North Suffolk Skills Centre for education, voluntary and community purposes. Alongside this, there is a requirement to retain the existing sports and play facilities at Dairy Hill. As of the beginning of 2021, the eastern part of the site has outline planning permission to deliver the housing requirements of the allocation. Planning applications have been submitted for the outside sports facilities and for the residential care home. Planning applications for the apartments and the indoor sports facilities are expected later in the year.
- 1.11 Along with the Healthy Neighbourhood, the following sites are allocated in the Local Plan (housing numbers are approximate):
- 200 dwellings on land adjacent to Chediston Street (which, as of late-2020, has outline planning permission). This includes provision of a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) which is a play facility aimed at the needs of older children.
  - 40 dwellings along with a community centre and pre-school on land at Dairy Farm, Saxons Way.
  - 10 dwellings on land north of Old Station Road (which now has full planning permission for 15 dwellings).
- 1.12 In neighbouring Holton, immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area, 2.64 hectares of land is allocated for employment development.
- 1.13 The Local Plan identifies a number of community infrastructure needs, including library improvements, extension/improvements to Cutlers Hill Surgery, expansion of primary education provision and a new pre-school (on the Dairy Farm site), a new community centre (on the Dairy

Farm site), various types of sports provision (on the Healthy Neighbourhood), a natural play area on Millennium Green and new parks and play spaces on all development allocations.

## **Developing the Neighbourhood Plan**

- 1.14 A Neighbourhood Plan for Halesworth was proposed in September 2017 at a community meeting. Those present agreed that having a Plan would be beneficial for the town. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) was established in late-2017 which included councillors and local residents and monthly meetings were established.



*First public meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018*

- 1.15 Activities undertaken to gather evidence include:
- An Open Evening in September 2018 to establish the issues, opportunities, weaknesses and strengths of Halesworth.
  - A questionnaire to understand more about specific issues.
  - A session with primary school children in years 5 and 6.
  - A youth consultation
  - Interviews with a wide range of local businesses and voluntary groups.
  - A feedback form on the draft vision and objectives of the plan.
- 1.16 The Coronavirus pandemic greatly restricted the range of in-person consultations but the community has been regularly updated through the local Community News, Town Council meetings and the Facebook Community Forum.





*Cancelling the consultation on the Vision and Objectives because of lockdown, March 2020*

## Monitoring the Plan

- 1.17 As the responsible body for preparing a neighbourhood plan covering the parish of Halesworth, it will fall to Halesworth Town Council to monitor progress against the Neighbourhood Plan's objectives and to ensure that it remains relevant.

## 2 LOCAL CONTEXT

### History of Halesworth

- 2.1 The beginnings of the town of Halesworth are considered most likely to date from the Middle Saxon period, with a small number of buildings being situated on the side of the ridge close to the town river. The Late Saxon name for Halesworth was 'Halesuworde' a word probably derived from the Saxon word 'Healsword' meaning a corner of land with water on two sides. It is assumed that a village grew around a river crossing; a Saxon causeway was found in excavations near the White Hart.
- 2.2 The transition to a town began with the creation of a yearly fair and weekly market founded by crusading lord of the manor Sir Richard de Argentein in 1223. The Market concentrated on butchery but other industries also developed, especially metalworking, leather goods, agricultural produce, brewing and spinning and weaving, and other trades associated with the wool trade.
- 2.3 The town's growing prosperity is evidenced from the fact that many of the town's buildings in the Thoroughfare and Market Place area date from the 15th to 18th centuries, many having later Georgian or Victorian fronts. There was a growth in the flax and hemp industry during this time, and the spinning and weaving of linen products became an increasingly important part of Halesworth's economy, along with the traditional agriculture, and food and drink related trades. The Norton family, for example, who built the magnificent Gothic House in the Town, made their money by selling food provisions to the military.



***Gothic House 16<sup>th</sup> Century Grade II\* listed***



***St Mary's Church 15<sup>th</sup> Century Grade II\* listed***

- 2.4 The Agricultural and Industrial Revolution slowly began to impact on the population and economy of Halesworth from the late 18th century onwards, gathering pace in the 19th century.
- 2.5 The coming of the railway in 1854 led to further growth and by the end of the 19th century the town's key industries, in addition to those mentioned above, were printing, ironworking/agricultural engineering, livestock, brick making, coach making, leatherworking and a growing retail sector serving the town and the surrounding villages.
- 2.6 Despite the early 20th century being a period of rapid social change, the important industries in Halesworth changed little, but some became casualties of uncertain economic times, competition, or overtaken by technological change, such as the Coachworks, Ironworks, and the Southwold Railway. The population slowly declined from its then peak of around 2,700 people in the 1850s.



- 2.7 There was a period of considerable expansion in the 1960s with the population of the Town doubling by 1981. The Urban District Council pursued a policy of attracting industry to the town coupled with house building. A new secondary school was built in 1958. Major employers such as agricultural engineers Howard Rotavators, brought over 600 jobs to Halesworth, as did the Bernard Matthews food processing plant in nearby Holton. The town became the fastest-growing town in East Suffolk except for Felixstowe, with new retail and catering and other service industry establishments meeting the demands of the increased population. Paradoxically it was during this period that the majority of maltings, the driving force behind 19th century expansion of the town, closed.



*Maltings on Quay Street now converted to flats*

- 2.8 The boom time was over by the mid-1980s and like many other rural market towns, Halesworth adapted to a mixture of the traditional and the new. For example, the old-world charm of its independent shops in the Thoroughfare, contrasts with a diversity of new small industries on its industrial estates. A new library and supermarket were built in the 1990s, the Thoroughfare was largely pedestrianised, and a bypass was built around it. In the last twenty years, the loss of amenities such as its hospital, middle/secondary school and an outdoor swimming pool have been keenly felt.

## **Halesworth Today**

- 2.9 In 2020 Halesworth won the Stars of Norfolk and Waveney Village/Town of the year award. The judges were impressed with the way people in Halesworth came together during the Covid crisis to “provide comprehensive support for vulnerable people in the town, bringing together individual volunteers, community groups, the church, local businesses and the town council..... a result of a long-standing community spirit in the town.”
- 2.10 Responses to the first consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan demonstrated that this view of the town is shared by many residents. They like the town, they like living in it, they like their fellow residents and some do not want to see it change. The Waveney Local Plan 2019 (now part of the East Suffolk Local Plan) however will bring changes and with several major developments in the offing, others see it as ‘a chance in a lifetime opportunity’ for the town.

- 2.11 Policies in the Local Plan, such as an extension to the primary school, a new community centre and under-5's provision, do address some of the infrastructure concerns that people have identified. It also proposes a high number of new homes with a consequent increase in population. A major worry is that the infrastructure will not keep pace with this growth, or cannot be delivered at all, putting yet more pressure on over stretched services. How to incorporate these changes and potential improvements in ways that are sympathetic to Halesworth's history, respectful of its environment, and which brings opportunities to residents and businesses without losing what people love about the town is the challenge for the future. The Neighbourhood Plan Group has been very conscious of these dilemmas when trying to weigh up competing views of the present and the future.
- 2.12 Halesworth shares many of the characteristics of other market towns in Suffolk. However, it also has some unique qualities that reflect its strengths and weaknesses, creating specific challenges and opportunities which the Neighbourhood Plan tries to address.
- 2.13 The town's housing stock is generally good with high levels of home ownership. Prices have steadily increased by 34% over the last two decades<sup>1</sup>, a low increase when compared to the rest of Suffolk but higher than national averages. An increase of private renting, including shared ownership, supports an assessment that low-income families are being priced out of home ownership. The population is demographically skewed, more than the average in Suffolk or nationally, towards the elderly groups and this is reflected in high numbers of single households. 91% of properties are medium sized houses or bungalows, the latter being in great demand. The disparity between incomes, house prices and market rents indicate that more affordable and social rented properties and shared ownership are needed. Private demand, however, indicates a shortage of larger detached properties.



*Variety of housing from across the centuries*

<sup>1</sup> Source: Land Registry, via [www.home.co.uk](http://www.home.co.uk)

- 2.14 Saxons Way bypass, completed in 1989, enabled Halesworth's historic high street (The Thoroughfare) to become semi-pedestrianised in 1991, unlike other local towns where cars are much more dominant. The Thoroughfare has many independent niche shops and cafes, an interesting and pleasing range of shop fronts and street furniture and is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Empty shops do not remain so for long. The Market Place, situated in the oldest part of town has some fine buildings and a small market once a week, but is rather cut off from the Thoroughfare. A Town Centre Connectivity consultation was commissioned to find ways of resolving this so the whole town centre can be better connected.

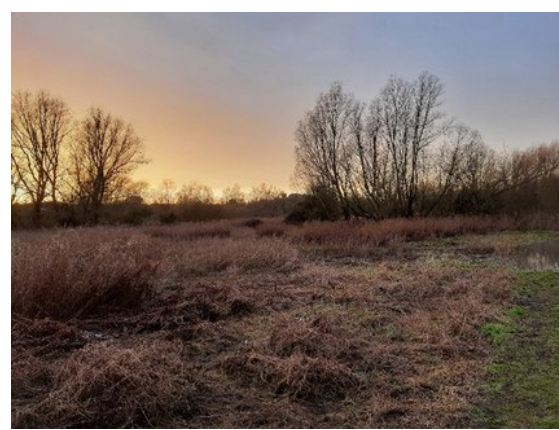


*Thoroughfare in the early morning*



*Market Place on market day*

- 2.15 The Neighbourhood Plan consultations indicated support for a second supermarket, and the Town Council gave it a cautious although much caveated welcome. A previous application for a second supermarket in the town attracted a large number of supportive representations from residents.
- 2.16 Saxons Way, with a pedestrian crossing only at one end, acts as a barrier to another unique aspect of Halesworth - the Millennium Green to the east, the largest such green in England at 20+ hectares. Managed by volunteers, it offers the town large stretches of biodiverse, naturally managed, open space and waterways. With National Cycle Route 1 meandering through the Green, people can walk and cycle at any time of year.



*Peace and tranquillity of the Millennium Green*

- 2.17 Another voluntary organisation, Halesworth in Bloom, has shown the way in using planting to improve the look and biodiversity of the town. Environmental protection, rewilding, increased



natural habitats are issues that local children reported to us as important to them and want to see more of. Other environmental issues however cause concern. The Town River, a tributary of the River Blyth, runs through the town under the Thoroughfare. The big flood of 1993 is still remembered, and the last few years have seen the water rising to levels which seriously affect and endanger businesses and homes. Changing agricultural methods, too little maintenance work and unclear accountabilities have all contributed to neglect of the river. A strategic, collaborative plan of action is needed to resolve the problems and the Neighbourhood Plan Group is working with the Town Council and relevant organisations to address them.



***Halesworth in Bloom brightening up the Town Park entrance and roundabouts***

- 2.18 A lack of sports facilities has been recognised in the Local Plan, through proposals to develop a 'Healthy Neighbourhood' area, (see below). Plans for the Campus sports centre and outside facilities were submitted in 2021 with, subject to planning permission, an expected operational date in 2023. Together with the sports clubs located on land and buildings owned by Halesworth Community Sport and Leisure, this will bring much improvement although the planned for and much desired swimming pool needs more resources to deliver.
- 2.19 The need for improved facilities for young people were highlighted in the Neighbourhood Plan Group's consultations. Young people "hanging around" are sometimes seen as a problem. The popular skateboarding park needs significant improvement or replacement, and the building currently being used for the town's only youth club, entirely voluntary run, will need to be demolished if the sports centre is built. Formal youth organisations are present in the town but, with the low numbers of young people, do struggle. The time is right for the Town Council to lead a group of agencies and young people to devise a plan for sustainable youth activities for the future.
- 2.20 Younger children are better catered for with above average numbers of play spaces across the town, but the quality of the spaces and equipment is very varied. East Suffolk Council has undertaken a strategic review of provision and the investment required which should assist in deciding which spaces can and should be brought up to modern standards.
- 2.21 The closure of the middle school in 2012 is still a source of regret in the town and leaves a gap in educational provision. Under 5's provision and the primary school are to be extended to take account of the growth in population and the Skills Centre, for post 16's, has reopened but older children must travel to neighbouring towns for their education. The low numbers of younger families in the town may reflect this gap in school provision but the result is a loss of the vitality young people bring, the focus on learning and achievement to which a secondary school contributes, and the potential for young people developing strong community ties. Furthermore,

the education needs of any new families coming to live in the housing developments envisaged in the Local Plan could not be locally met. The Neighbourhood Plan Group is exploring the possibilities of reversing this trend, in conjunction with relevant bodies.

- 2.22 The declining health and social care infrastructure is of great concern particularly in the light of an aging population. Halesworth is said to be the furthest away from a District General Hospital of any town in the country. The local Patrick Stead hospital beds, which catered for elderly people, have closed but not been replaced with any locally based intensive home care service. The hospital had also provided a minor injuries clinic and some outpatient services but all of these, bar blood testing, have closed. An NHS day centre service for elderly and severely disabled people has also closed.
- 2.23 A planned extension to the GP surgery is not seen as resolving the problem of the reduced numbers of GPs although new ways of working, post Covid, may help. Halesworth falls within the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group which is responsible for GP and health provision. Suffolk County Council is the Social Care authority and has a public health role throughout the county.
- 2.24 The gaps in health provision are filled to some extent by a wide range of voluntary organisations providing home care, end of life care, day care and transport along with small entrepreneurial private enterprises serving meals and care.



*A small selection of voluntary organisations in the town*

- 2.25 Halesworth's rich and varied civil society is not limited to health. There are many societies, clubs, a museum and various organisations offering opportunities to meet others, develop hobbies and take part in activities. The Library is now run by Suffolk Libraries which is an independent charity. They all enrich the culture and environment of the town and provide many essential services. However, there is no community centre to act as a focal meeting point but the Local Plan designates land and requires developer contributions (through the Community Infrastructure Levy) for a new Centre. Plans setting out what such a facility would provide and how to make it financially viable are yet to emerge.

- 2.26 Other spaces are available for people to meet in a wide range of places from the Rifle Hall, The Cut Arts Centre, Chinnys Sports Bar, Churches, and the Library.
- 2.27 The A12, the trunk road which cuts through the county from North to South, five miles to the east helps define Halesworth economically. Larger firms have not been attracted to the town in recent years because of the poor road infrastructure but there has been a trend towards small and medium sized enterprises thriving alongside the activities of service, retail, and agriculture. Having a train service with a promised through train to London may make the town a good base for home workers and entrepreneurs. If the new power station at Sizewell is built there is potential for skilled employment and training opportunities coming to the area. There is a thriving creative industries culture and infrastructure, with an above average number of people recorded as working in these disciplines. The development of The Cut Arts centre in 2003, in a former Maltings building has attracted and encouraged this and together with other artistic initiatives being planned, such as that on the Healthy Neighbourhood site (see below), it is seen as having potential to create jobs, encourage more visitors to come to the town and therefore, generate a higher level of economic activity. Tourists using Halesworth as both a base to explore the coast and the countryside and a place to visit for day trips are also important for the town's economic future.



*The Cut Arts Centre*



*Halesworth Railway Station*

- 2.28 It is expected that reliance on the car will continue for some years although there is much support to improve connectivity around town by improving and extending cycling and walking routes. The motor trades have left their mark on the town as it became a district centre for all the major car dealerships. This is beginning to change as dealerships centralise in the larger towns, sales go online, and electric vehicles increase. This is likely to result in further change to the pattern of employment in Halesworth.

### **Halesworth's socio-economic profile**

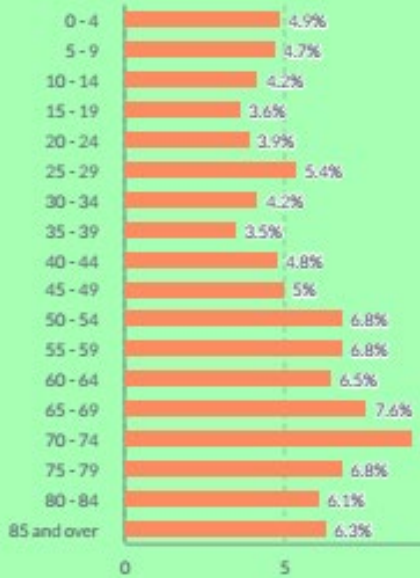
- 2.29 Unless stated otherwise, the figures in this section of the Plan come from the 2011 Census.
- 2.30 In 2018, the population of Halesworth was estimated to be 4,942 people (source: Office for National Statistics). This represented an increase of 4.6% since 2011. When compared with Suffolk and England, it has a much higher proportion of people of retirement age and a corresponding lower proportion of both children and adults of working age.
- 2.31 By far the most common type of household is 1- and 2-person households where the Household Reference Person (or HRP, formerly known as the 'head of household') is of retirement age (44% of households in 2011). Only 12% of households in Halesworth in 2011 fitted the common 'family' profile of a 35-54-year-old HRP in a household with dependent children (in Suffolk this is 19% and in England, 20%).

- 2.32 As a result of the high proportion of retirees, Halesworth has a low rate of economic activity. In 2011 only 66% of those aged 16-74 were either working, unemployed or a full-time student; in Suffolk the equivalent figure was 71%.
- 2.33 Of the Halesworth residents that are working, this is predominantly in either low skilled occupations (e.g. retail, which accounts for 18% of jobs) or occupations at a mid-skill level (caring, leisure and other service occupations and skilled trades occupations). The workforce is poorly represented by those in higher skilled occupations. The level of qualifications attained are similarly below average.
- 2.34 This feeds through to the levels of employment deprivation in Halesworth. The central area of Halesworth is in the top-20% most deprived areas for employment in the country.

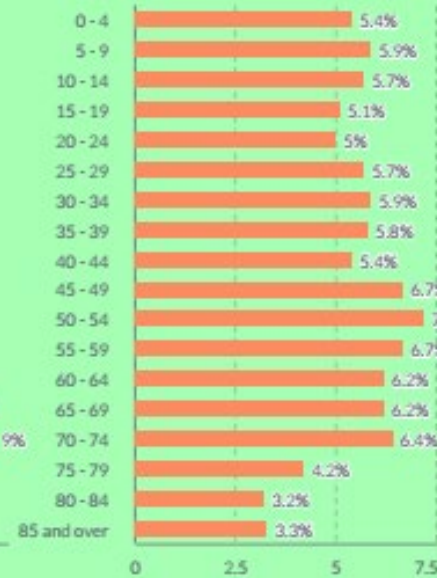


## Age Structure

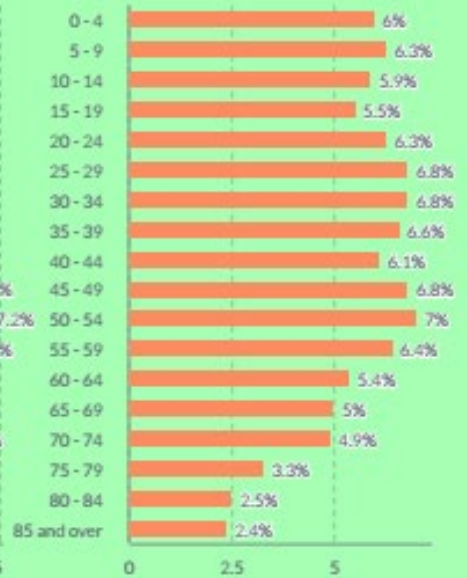
### Halesworth



### Suffolk



### England



Large proportion of retirees compared with Suffolk and England

## Dwelling Size (Number of Bedrooms)

### Halesworth



### Suffolk



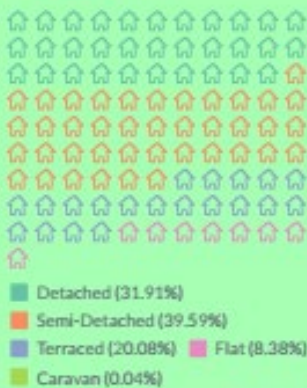
### England



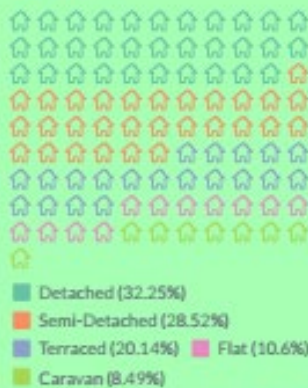
Large proportion of 2 bedroom properties compared with Suffolk and England

## Property Type

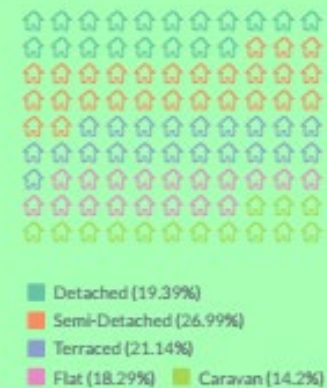
### Halesworth



### Suffolk



### England

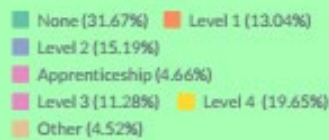


Large proportion of semi-detached houses compared with Suffolk and England

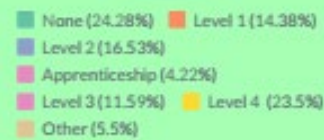


## Qualifications

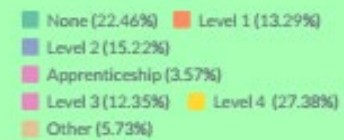
### Halesworth



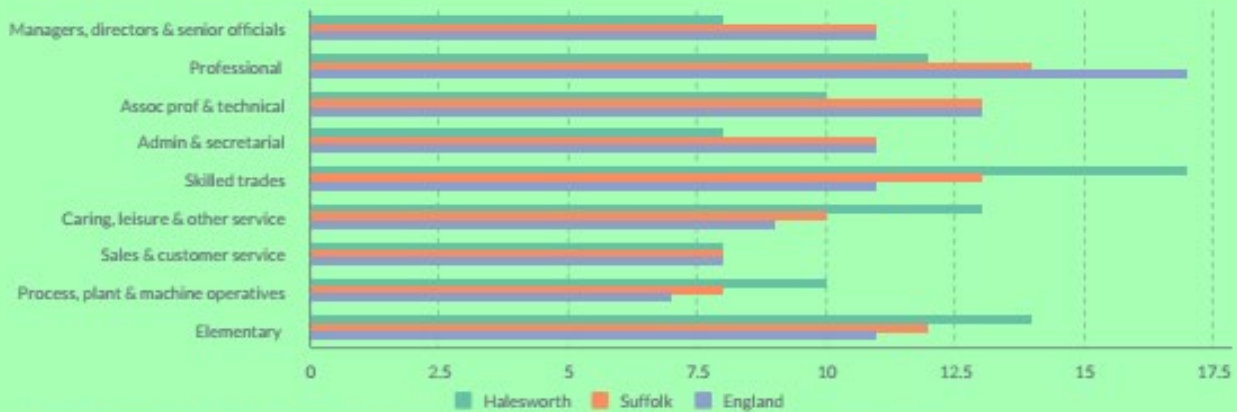
### Suffolk



### England

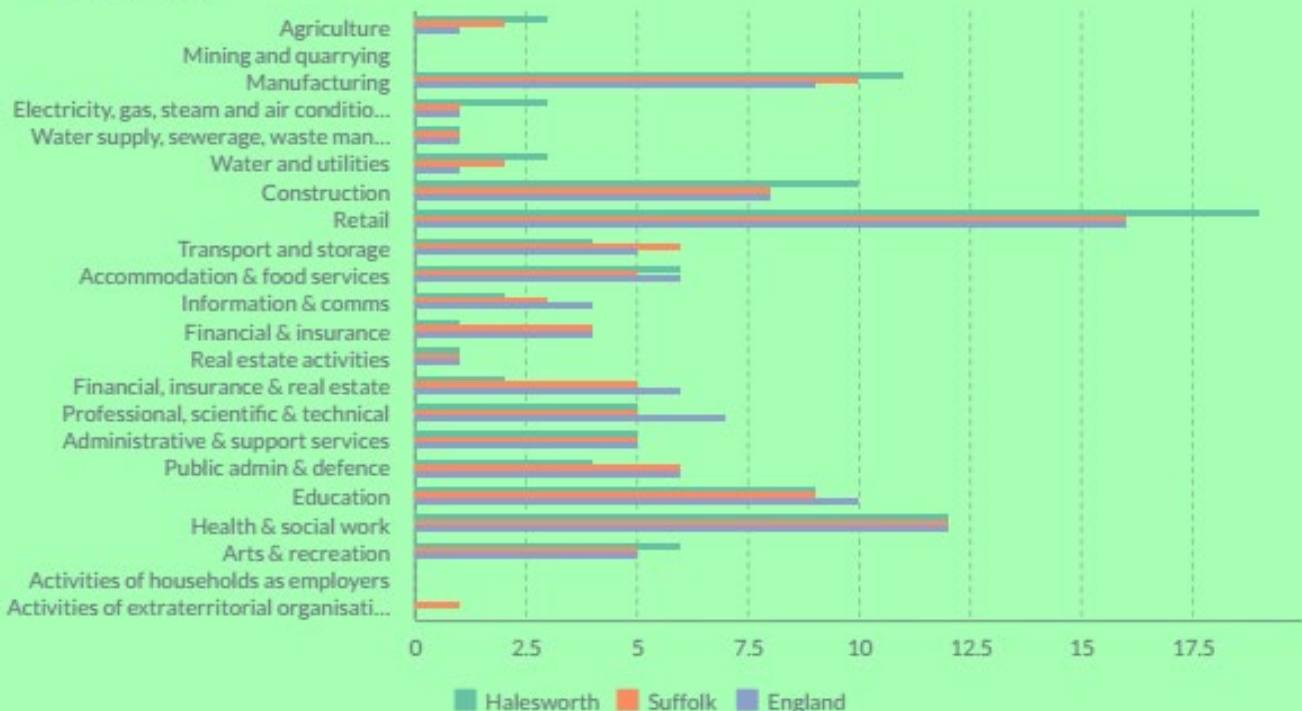


## Occupations/Skills (%)



High proportion with low qualifications working in lower skilled occupations compared with Suffolk and England

## Industry (%)



Retail is dominant; higher value sectors such as finance and IT services are poor

## Deprivation



The central area of Halesworth is in the top-20% most deprived areas for employment in the country

## Car Ownership (Average per Household)



Halesworth

Broadly in line with the average

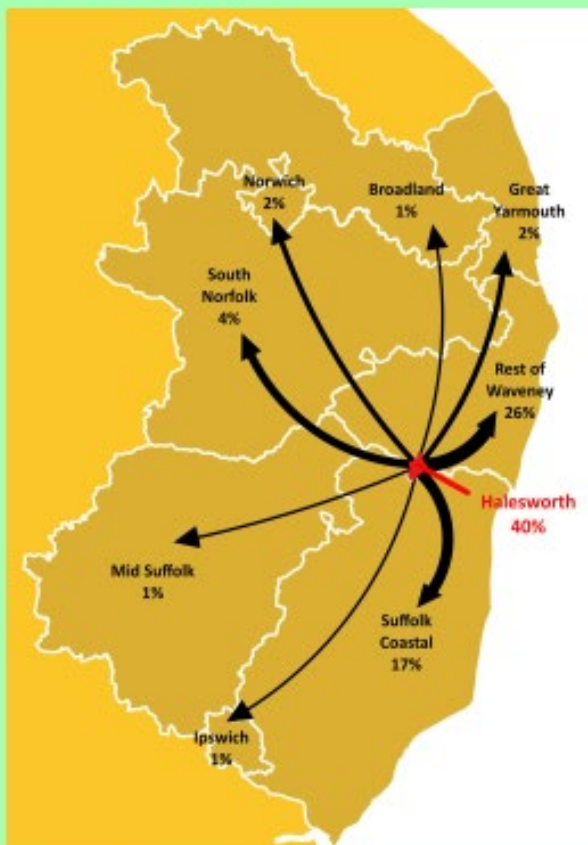


Suffolk



England

## Travel to Work



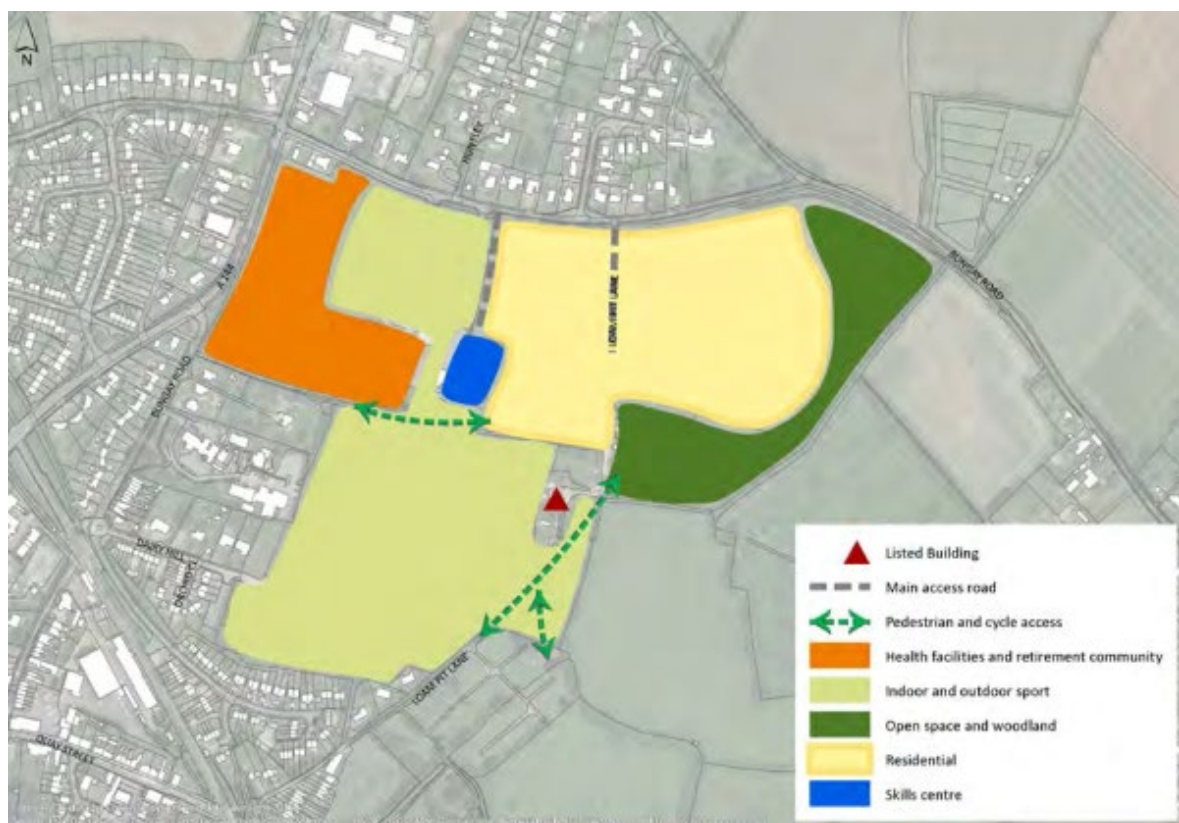
Work journeys largely local

A significantly higher number of people come to Halesworth each day to work than leave to work elsewhere

### The Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood

- 2.35 The Waveney Local Plan allocates a significant area of land (over 22 hectares) in the north west of Halesworth for the 'Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood'. This is expected to provide a mix of residential, health care, retirement, sports, education and training uses. Figure 2.1 shows the indicative masterplan that is presented in the Local Plan. Alongside the new dwellings (which have outline planning permission) will be new and improved grass sports fields, a 3G all-weather pitch and an indoor sports complex. Halesworth Community, Sport and Leisure, (formerly Halesworth Playing Fields Association) will also implement its own plans to retain and improve the existing sports facilities at Dairy Hill, which will contribute towards the Halesworth Healthy Neighbourhood.
- 2.36 Alongside the sports facilities will be high quality care and accommodation for elderly residents as well as additional GP health facilities for the community.
- 2.37 The Apollo Youth Club is located on the site of the former middle school and provides a valuable facility for children and teenagers from Halesworth and the surrounding area. A replacement for the Apollo Youth Club can be catered for as part of the development, if funding can be found.
- 2.38 The North Suffolk Skills Centre has been retained on the site and reopened primarily for vocational education provided by Suffolk New College - on the Coast.

**Figure 2.1: Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood indicative masterplan**



Source: Waveney Local Plan, Figure 15

### 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

#### Challenges for Halesworth

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Halesworth. These challenges have been derived from consultation with the community as well as other sources of information and evidence. In summary these challenges are:

##### Environment

- Poor quality environment around the town's waterways.
- Green spaces that are important and should be protected and improved.
- The need as a town to address the climate and environmental crisis.

##### Housing

- A shortage of affordable and rented housing for young people and families, and of accommodation for the elderly.
- The need for new housing to be designed to meet people's needs as they change and to be built to the best possible environmental standards.

##### Employment

- Lack of local job opportunities which is in part a function of a lack of suitable employment spaces for start-ups, micro-businesses and small businesses and low educational attainment.

##### Infrastructure

- Lack of access to community, sporting and leisure facilities.
- Poorly maintained outdoor play facilities and open spaces.
- Pressure on medical and educational facilities.

##### Heritage and design

- The need to recognise and celebrate Halesworth's heritage.
- 'Identikit' new development that is out of keeping with the character of Halesworth.

##### Movement

- A lack of infrastructure to encourage increased walking and cycling which would help to alleviate traffic-related issues, particularly around the town centre.
- Poor quality public transport services.

##### Town Centre

- The town centre's potential as a shopping and social destination is constrained by a lack of integration of its distinct parts.

#### Vision and Neighbourhood Plan Objectives for Halesworth

- 3.2 In consultation with the community, the established vision for Halesworth and the objectives to deliver the vision are as follows:



# OUR VISION



Imagine Halesworth in 15 years' time. It has become a larger more vibrant town offering an excellent range of services and facilities, making it an even more attractive place to live, work and visit. It is widely recognised as a centre for the arts, the Millennium Green is seen as an ecological asset and the town is used more as a tourist base from which to explore both coastal and inland areas assisted by the through trains to London.

Local businesses have benefitted, families have been attracted to settle by the availability of new **homes** and employment opportunities and there are better facilities to support older residents. New building has encouraged contemporary design whilst retaining the character and **heritage** of the built environment and landscape.

Better community and play facilities serve the town's needs and the **sports facilities** at the Halesworth Healthy Neighbourhood development are accessible to everyone, no matter their age or ability. The new health and social care facilities offer elderly people accommodation better suited to their needs. Residents are enjoying their new community centre and Halesworth's greener feel with its expanded open spaces, newly planted trees and flowers and better access to its waterways.

More people make short journeys around town on foot and bike thanks to improvements to the network of **footpaths and cycle tracks**. The roads are less congested but for those who still need to drive and use the car parks, spaces are available and provide electric charging points. There are buses and trains for those travelling further afield.

Halesworth town centre has become a busier and more integrated place. The Thoroughfare, long term car park and Market Place are now clearly linked, providing a wide range of

independent shops, cafes and restaurants, complemented by the Library and other community activities. With better **connections** to the Park and Millennium Green the overall Town Centre experience is broadened making it an increasingly popular place for people - including more tourists - to spend their time.

Not only are Halesworth's shops prospering but the town has attracted new businesses thanks to the creation of high-quality **business spaces**. Creative and internet-based enterprises have been attracted by Halesworth's status as a centre for the arts and biodiversity, its growing population and its accessibility, seeing the town as somewhere they can flourish.

Halesworth's **greener environment** has led to a lower carbon footprint, enabled by the effective use of planning, design and technical innovation.



What people valued in Halesworth in 2020 remains, yet forward thinking has created a greener, more resilient and sustainable community, a healthier and happier town, of which everyone is proud.

# OUR OBJECTIVES



1. Make Halesworth an environmentally friendly town: revitalising the waterways, enhancing biodiversity and protecting, improving and expanding our green spaces.



2. Ensure that new housing is appropriate for the needs and incomes of all generations, particularly those working and on low incomes and is sustainable for future generations through the adoption of green building and design principles.



3. Develop a range of spaces on both existing and new sites which attract businesses and create employment opportunities, particularly in skilled and creative industries and in tourism.



4. Provide a wider range of better-quality community, sport / leisure and education facilities for all ages.



5. Maintain and enhance the character and heritage of Halesworth's built environment and landscape whilst encouraging sympathetic contemporary design.



6. Promote a transport infrastructure which connects different parts of the town and enables people to move about easily, safely, and enjoyably whether on foot, bicycle, mobility vehicle or public transport.



7. Better integrate the distinct parts of the Town Centre and make it a place where more people want to come and spend their time and support the local economy.

## Addressing climate change

- 3.3 Many residents identified the need to do as much as possible to address climate change over the lifetime of the Plan. The importance of this issue is recognised and the Plan addresses a number of matters of relevance, including protecting green spaces, creating a nature reserve and encouraging the development of energy efficient housing. However, many matters raised by residents are either already addressed in the Waveney Local Plan or are restricted by national policy. In particular, Local Plan policy already addresses the following matters:
- Flood risk: Policy WLP8.24 explicitly requires development to take into account climate change when assessing flood risk. Proposals must provide sustainability benefits that outweigh flood risk. They should use sustainable drainage systems to drain surface water and should deliver water quality and aquatic biodiversity improvements where possible.
  - Renewable and low carbon energy: Policy WLP8.27 supports the development of renewable and low carbon energy schemes.
  - Sustainable construction: Policy WLP8.28 requires development of 10 or more houses and commercial schemes of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more to submit a sustainability statement which shows how, where possible, they have incorporated efficient heating, cooling and lighting, sustainable water management measures (including water efficiency in terms of use per person) and used locally sourced and recycled materials.
- 3.4 National policy limits what both local and neighbourhood plans can *require* of development as this is addressed through Building Regulations. Despite this, a number of the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan will contribute towards minimising and mitigating the impact of climate change. These include:
- The protection of twelve Local Green Spaces, three open spaces and roadside verges from development.
  - Support for the creation of a new nature reserve.
  - Protection of heritage trees.
  - A policy encouraging low energy and energy efficient housing design.
  - The identification of key movement routes to increase levels of walking and cycling.
  - A requirement for electric car charging points.
- 3.5 The message is clear that the community wants these matters to be addressed as far as possible and the Neighbourhood Plan therefore supports activities and actions in Halesworth that contribute towards this goal.

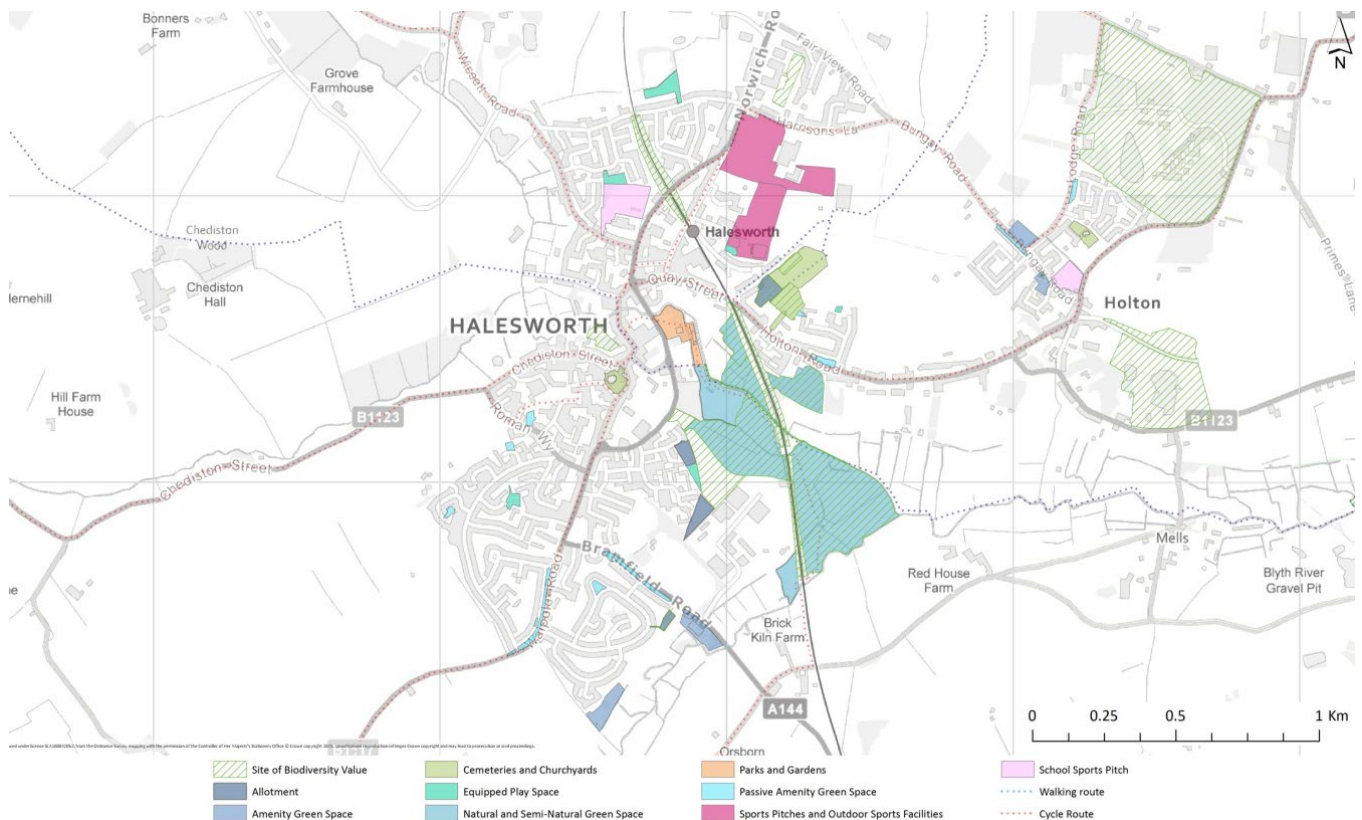
## 4 ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The environment was a concern frequently raised by Halesworth residents when asked about their priorities for the town. The NPSG therefore set out to address this. The following objective was consulted upon and received community approval:

***To make Halesworth an environmentally friendly town: revitalising the waterways, enhancing biodiversity and protecting, improving and expanding our green spaces***

- 4.2 One of the major initiatives that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to deliver is a nature reserve in the south of the town. This is addressed in more detail in this section of the plan. Its role in enhancing the environment of Halesworth is significant, including its role in increasing green space, biodiversity and providing greater resilience against the possible effects of climate change.
- 4.3 Figure 4.1 shows that Halesworth has a wide range of green, open and leisure spaces.

**Figure 4.1: Existing green spaces in Halesworth**



Source: Waveney District Council (2015) *Waveney Green Infrastructure Strategy*



## Local Green Spaces

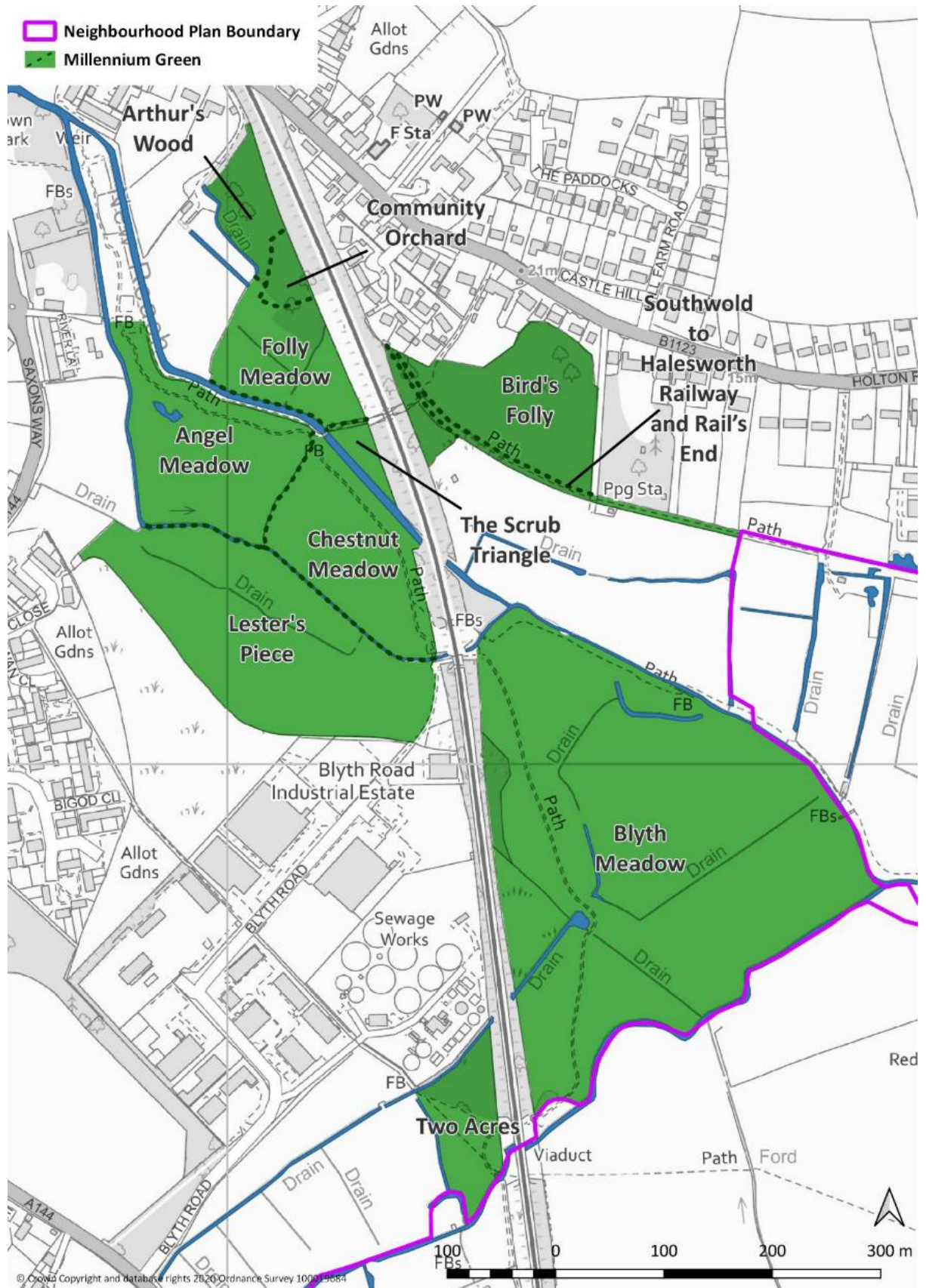
- 4.4 Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
  - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 4.5 Twelve spaces are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:
- Millennium Green – Blyth Meadow
  - Millennium Green – Two Acres
  - Millennium Green – Birds Folly
  - Millennium Green – Folly Meadow
  - Millennium Green – Chestnut Meadow
  - Millennium Green – Angel Meadow
  - Millennium Green – Lester’s Piece
  - Millennium Green – The Scrub Triangle
  - Millennium Green – Arthur’s Wood
  - Millennium Green – Community Orchard
  - Millennium Green – Southwold to Halesworth Railway and Rail’s End
  - The Town Park
- 4.6 Policy ENV1 follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. If development proposals come forward on the local green spaces within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by East Suffolk Council. It will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the ‘very special circumstances’ required by the policy.

### Millennium Green areas



*Millennium Green*

**Figure 4.2: Millennium Green areas**





- 4.7 The Halesworth Millennium Green is the largest of its kind in England, totalling just under 21 hectares. It was created in 2000 with further areas subsequently added. It has a range of meadows, woodlands, rivers, ponds, heathland and orchard, following the historic route of the old railway and the even older navigation. As well as its history, the Green is rich in wildlife and geology. As well as providing a place for the community to walk, cycle and spend time in nature (with guided walks offered by the Millennium Green Trust) It is used for a range of local activities such as fairs and festivals.
- 4.8 The Millennium Green consists of eleven distinct parts, each with its own unique features that contribute towards the overall area. These are shown on Figure 4.2.
- 4.9 The Green is managed by the Millennium Green Trust, a registered charity run by volunteer trustees. The NPSG consulted the Millennium Green Trust and carried out a survey to speak to users of the Green. The users were asked if they thought the green was demonstrably special, and if so why. The vast majority of those surveyed said that the Green was special because of its wildlife, history, community events and the opportunity it provides for people to spend time in nature. Similarly, most agreed with the idea of obtaining local green space designation as a means of safeguarding the green for the future.
- 4.10 A small part of the Millennium Green extends outside the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst this is still part of the Green, it is not possible to designate it as a Local Green Space in the Plan. It will however still be managed by the Millennium Green Trust.

### **Town Park**



*Town Park*

**Figure 4.3: Town Park**



- 4.11 The Town Park was originally created by Donald Newby, Chairman of Halesworth Urban Development Corporation (UDC) (1970-1971) and with the help of Lady Rugby who donated some of the land. It totals 0.86 hectares and now provides open space and activities for toddlers through to teenagers in the form of children's play areas, a skateboard park and a half basketball court .
- 4.12 A large proportion of the park is maintained to maximise wildlife and biodiversity. There is an abundance of wildflowers, bulbs and mature trees, which make this park extremely attractive. The river also runs around the Town Park and on into the beautiful Millennium Green.
- 4.13 There are a number of paths through the park providing access to the old navigation canal and the old Halesworth to Southwold railway line. In addition, the town centre and Millennium Green are both within easy reach.
- 4.14 The Town Park is currently owned and managed by ESC but discussions are being held as to whether it should be transferred to Halesworth Town Council.
- 4.15 The NPSG carried out two separate surveys with the school children at Edgar Sewter Community Primary, in 2019 and 2021. This was to consult with them on what they liked about Halesworth, what they didn't like and what they wanted to see in 10 years' time. Over half of the children asked said they liked the Town Park. The first community consultation event held in 2018 also highlighted the Town Park as something the community very much liked and valued.

**POLICY HAL.ENV1: LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

**A. The following sites, as shown on Figures 4.1 and 4.2 and on the Policies Map, are designated as a Local Green Spaces:**

- a. Millennium Green – Blyth Meadow**
- b. Millennium Green - Two Acres**
- c. Millennium Green - Birds Folly**
- d. Millennium Green - Folly Meadow**
- e. Millennium Green - Chestnut Meadow**
- f. Millennium Green - Angel Meadow**
- g. Millennium Green - Lester's Piece**
- h. Millennium Green – The Scrub Triangle**
- i. Millennium Green – Arthur's Wood**
- j. Millennium Green – Community Orchard**
- k. Millennium Green – Southwold to Halesworth Railway and Rail's End**
- l. The Town Park**

**B. Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.**

## Open spaces

- 4.16 Halesworth has a small number of green spaces that are used for recreational activities. The main spaces are the town park and the Millennium Green. There are a number of other green spaces which, by virtue of their size or layout, do not lend themselves to such active use. However, the community considered that these spaces were nevertheless important, particularly to the immediate parts of the community that they serve. This may only be in providing an attractive backdrop but nevertheless, this was cited as important by people in connecting them with nature within their town. In this regard, it helps to enhance mental health and wellbeing.
- 4.17 The Waveney Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>2</sup> identifies a number of the open spaces across Halesworth. Local Plan Policy WLP8.23 (Protection of Open Space) provides protection for these spaces, only allowing their development for other uses in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated to be surplus to requirements and it can be replaced elsewhere.
- 4.18 Three potential open spaces were identified by the NPSG that had not been included in the Green Infrastructure Strategy. As such, they are currently not protected as green spaces by Local Plan Policy WLP8.23. It is considered that, whilst they offer limited opportunities for informal activities because of their size, they make an important contribution to the green aspect of Halesworth's townscape and openness of its built-up area. In this regard they are considered to meet the Green Infrastructure Strategy definition of 'passive amenity green spaces' and therefore are protected in the same way that other such spaces are by the Local Plan (such as the green open space at Allington Road and Barley Meadow).
- 4.19 The three spaces, as shown in Figures 4.4 to 4.6, are:
- Princes Green
  - Aldergrove Close
  - Rectory Green

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<sup>2</sup> Waveney District Council (2015) *Waveney Green Infrastructure Strategy*



**Figures 4.4: Princes Green open space**

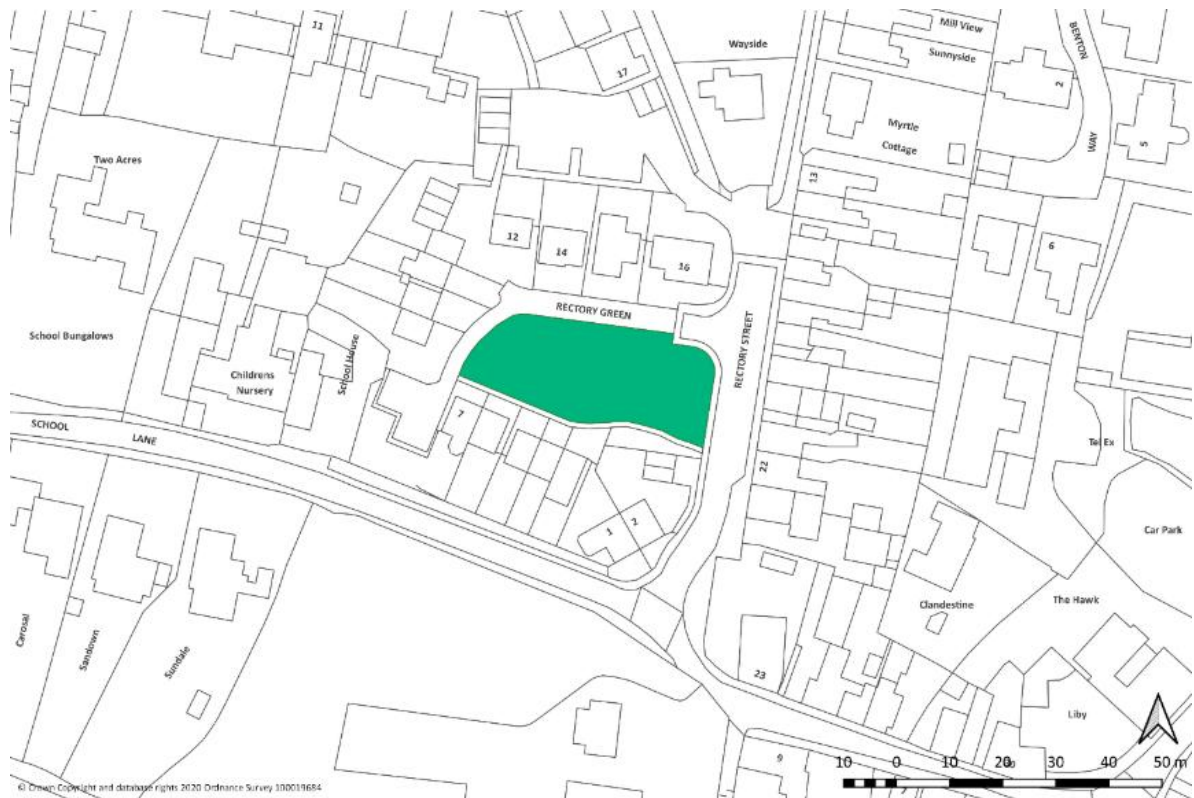


**Figures 4.5: Aldergrove Close open space**





**Figures 4.6: Rectory Green open space**



**POLICY HAL.ENV2: PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACES**

- A. The green spaces at Princes Green, Aldergrove Close and Rectory Green, as shown in Figures 4.4-4.6 and on the Policies Map, are designated open spaces.**
- B. Any proposals for development of these spaces will be assessed against the requirements of Local Plan Policy WLP8.23 (Protection of Open Space).**

## Nature reserve

- 4.20 In the south of the town, a unique area of land has been identified within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary (see Figure 4.7) which has significant potential to further enhance biodiversity<sup>3</sup> due to its excellent nature-enhancing properties. The land, south of Kennedy Close and adjacent to an area of public open space, is in flood zone 3 and is unsuitable for built development or arable activity. It also likely includes remains of historic water meadows associated with the River Blyth. However, the fact that it retains water means that it is a very attractive habitat for wetland species. Discussions and a viewing from the land boundary with the Environment Agency has confirmed these possibilities. To date, no opportunities have been taken to enhance the capacity of the land to support a greater variety of flora and fauna or to increase their population, but this could be achieved with careful and sensitive management. No similar parcels of land like this are found within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary. It also has the advantage of being identified as a key element to the creation of a circular path around the town's edge, linking with existing routes to the Millennium Green. This latter proposal would enable a satisfying leisure/educational experience for local people and visitors.



*Views of proposed nature reserve*

- 4.21 The nature reserve demarcated in Figure 4.7 could provide access for walkers as part of a proposed town perimeter walk between Kennedy Close and Bramfield Road, following the course of the River Blyth. Access to the reserve is feasible from the south via an existing local authority-owned public open space adjacent to Kennedy Close and from the north via the Basley open space and outdoor gym (adjacent to Bramfield Road). The latter is owned by Halesworth Community Sports and Leisure, a charitable organisation.
- 4.22 The NPSG has engaged positively with expert organisations including the Environment Agency, which has established the potential for such a proposal. It has also sought to engage positively with the landowners. Whilst landowner support has not been secured, it is hoped that over the

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<sup>3</sup> This requires formal confirmation through an ecological survey



lifetime of the plan issues can be resolved and the potential to deliver the nature reserve can be realised.

- 4.23 A small part of the proposed Nature Reserve extends outside the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst this is still part of the proposed area, it is not possible to designate it in the Plan.

**Figure 4.7: Area of proposed nature reserve**



**POLICY HAL.ENV3: NEW NATURE RESERVE**

**Proposals to deliver a nature reserve to the south of the town (as shown in Figure 4.7 and on the Policies Map) will be supported.**

**NON-POLICY ACTION: NEW NATURE RESERVE**

**Halesworth Town Council will continue to seek engagement with all landowner interests in order to secure the necessary agreements to deliver the new Nature Reserve.**

## Verges

- 4.24 Generous grass verges are a key characteristic of Halesworth. In built-up areas, the value of green verges to biodiversity is significant. Equally, such verges can be lost to parking, particularly where there are wide verges and cars can park entirely off-road. This results in significant degradation of the verge, loss of wildlife or loss of the opportunity for species-rich planting.



*Roman Road verges*

- 4.25 Particular examples of grass verges providing a positive impact on biodiversity are along Roman Way and Holton Road. The verges are managed to allow grass and wildflowers to grow which encourages wildlife, with some grass cutting to the road edges to maintain a tidy border. At key entrances and exits to the town these borders are planted with spring flowering bulbs (by Halesworth in Bloom) and also contain native trees. They should be protected to enable such opportunities to plant them and allow re-wilding. New development in Halesworth should also look to create similar opportunities along main routes, thereby maximising biodiversity and visual appeal as much as possible. In addition to the biodiversity gains the wide grass verges are pleasing to residents and visitors moving in and around the town.





*Holton Road verges*

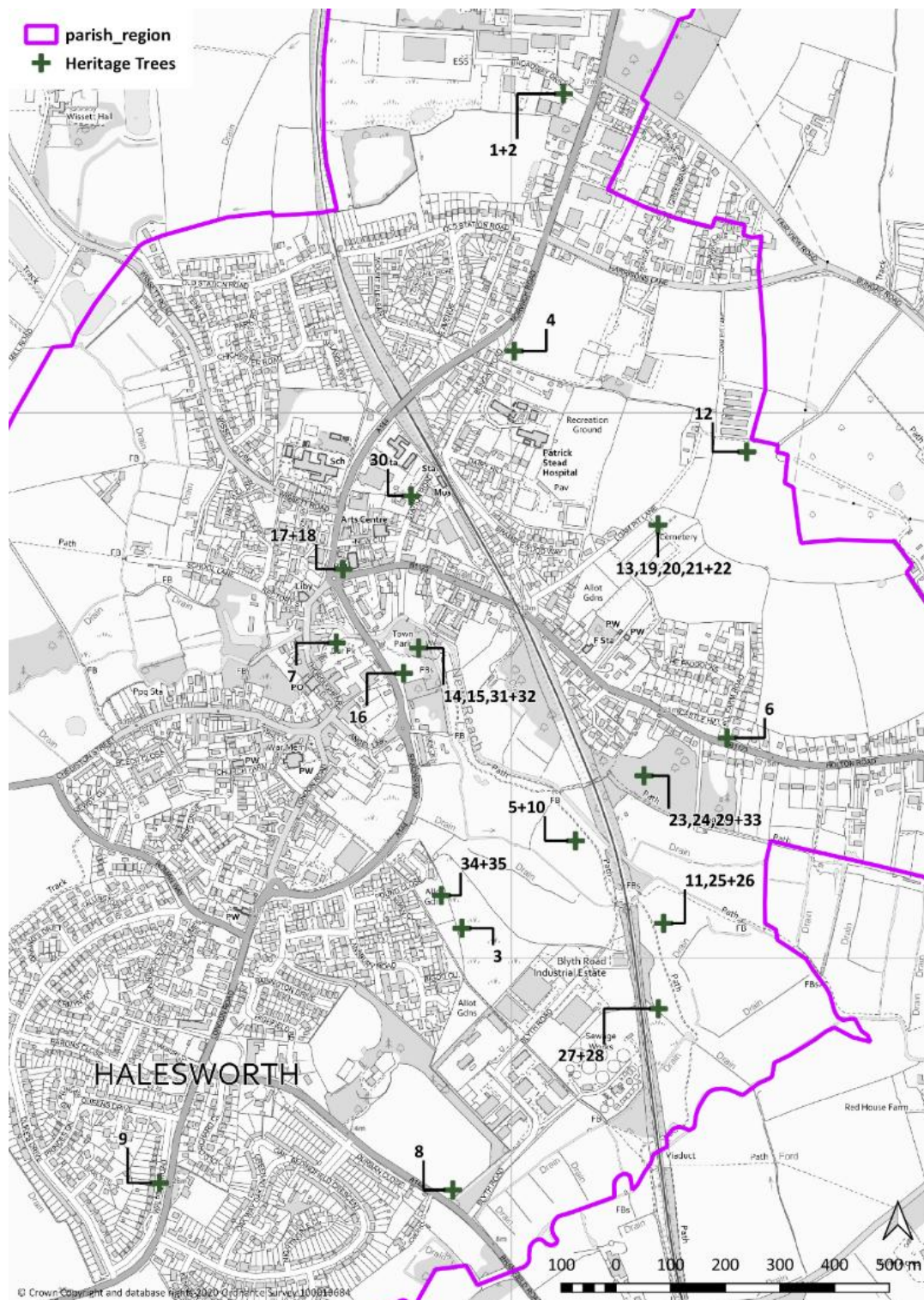
**POLICY HAL.ENV4: VERGES**

- A. Existing green verges along roadways should be retained and should only be removed if it is clearly demonstrated to be part of necessary highway improvements, including for walking and cycling. Any such improvements should incorporate opportunities for planting around the existing verges wherever practicable.**
- B. Major development (as defined in the NPPF) should maximise the provision of green verges along main roadways and should demonstrate that these are designed so that vehicles are not able to use them for parking or be degraded by day-to-day activity.**
- C. On roadways outside of main routes, the design of roadways and verges to maximise biodiversity value will be supported. This could include enabling the planting of street trees or wildflower meadows or the creation of community gardens.**
- D. Proposals to enhance the biodiversity value of verges will be strongly supported.**

## Heritage trees

- 4.26 The NPPF states in paragraph 131 that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. It also rightly requires that planning policies should seek to ensure that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

**Figure 4.8: Location of heritage trees**



- 4.27 Whilst not having the national recognition and protection of ancient woodland or veteran trees, heritage trees are considered important in the local context for a variety of reasons.
- 4.28 In Halesworth, 34 'heritage' trees have been identified by Halesworth in Bloom. A heritage tree is typically a large, individual tree with unique value, which is considered irreplaceable. The main criteria for a heritage tree are age, rarity and size, as well as aesthetic, botanical, ecological, and historical value. Trees identified by Halesworth in Bloom Tree Wardens have been important landscape features for many generations. Others may not be old but have been planted to commemorate a person or significant anniversary of events, or people locally. Anyone can put forward a tree for consideration to become a heritage tree in Halesworth. the register is intended to record these trees so that they can be protected.
- 4.29 Figure 4.8 shows the location of the heritage trees in Halesworth. Policy HAL.ENV5 seeks to protect them from being removed or from development immediately adjacent to them potentially affecting their roots as they grow.

**POLICY HAL.ENV5: HERITAGE TREES**

**Halesworth's heritage trees are shown in Figure 4.8 and on the Policies Map. Proposals for development of land on or immediately adjacent to a heritage tree should preserve the tree and avoid damage to its root structure.**

## **Actions to 'green' Halesworth**

- 4.30 Through the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, a number of actions and projects were identified that will assist in achieving the overall objective of making Halesworth a greener town. The suggested environmental actions below should be worked on by Halesworth Town Council as part of the green agenda the community wished to prioritise. These are:
- Establish a recycling hub in the town centre to allow residents to recycle items that are not currently permitted in the blue bins for residential bi-weekly collection.
  - Engage with local businesses to encourage the use of recyclable or reusable products and to establish the wider use of "plastic free" products and other "environmental schemes" locally.
  - To liaise with local landowners, District and County Councils to identify any possible sites for green energy solutions such as wind turbines and solar farms for the future. This is dependent on any grants or schemes available for construction of such infrastructure, and suitability of any potential sites

### **River and flooding**

- 4.31 Community consultation highlighted the concern of the community about flooding, the river and water quality. The Neighbourhood plan steering group worked with both Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) and the Environment Agency (EA) to obtain up to date information for residents about the current flood risk in town and river management. This coincided with the EA's own river assessments and the subsequent publication of their "Halesworth Flooding factsheet". The finalised factsheet will be available on the Town Council's website and a summarised version will be posted to the homes and businesses at greatest risk of flooding. The factsheet details planned annual



river maintenance, flooding advice, flood risk and important contact details for the Environment Agency.



*High river water levels to the town park (left) and flooding to the underpass (right)*

#### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: RIVERS AND WATERWAYS 1**

**Halesworth Town Council will support the Environment Agency and Suffolk Wildlife Trust to ensure that the town's rivers and waterways are managed in ways that bring better water quality, greater biodiversity and improved habitats for wildlife. It will:**

- i. seek to collaborate with work on biodiversity improvement projects and riparian tree planting schemes along the River Blyth and its tributaries;**
- ii. seek to collaborate with the Environment Agency to better understand flood risks and local floodplains and to ensure they are professionally managed, so contributing to increased biodiversity and improved habitats; and**
- iii. collaborate with the Environment Agency to provide up-to-date information to residents on flood risk and river maintenance programmes.**

#### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: RIVERS AND WATERWAYS 2**

**Halesworth Town Council will work with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the management and maintenance of green spaces, including grass verges, is done in ways that support biodiversity and wildlife.**



## 5 HOUSING

5.1 The need for 'affordable housing' (to buy and to rent), especially for young families, was mentioned by a significant number of respondents in the initial consultations. There was equal concern about the number of new houses that were planned in the town following the adoption of the Waveney Local Plan and whether these would 'overwhelm' the town.

5.2 In March 2020, following preparation of a Halesworth Housing Needs Assessment and further understanding of the present housing provision, the NPSG went out to consultation on the following objective:

***Ensure that new housing is appropriate for the needs and incomes of all generations, particularly those working and on low incomes and is sustainable for future generations through the adoption of green building and design principles.***

5.3 The Waveney Local Plan allocates sites for significant new housing developments that will deliver 465 new dwellings in Halesworth (numbers are approximate):

- WLP4.1 - Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood - 215 dwellings
- WLP4.2 Chediston Street - 200 dwellings
- WLP4.3 Land north of Old Station Road - 10 dwellings (subsequent planning application was submitted for 20 dwellings)
- WLP4.5 - Dairy Farm, Saxons Way - 40 dwellings.



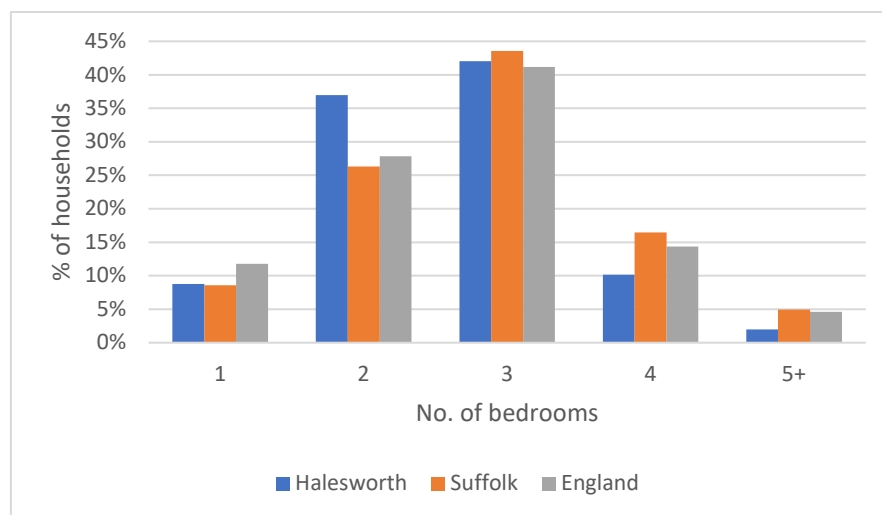
***Housing built since 2019***

- 5.4 With these developments alone, Halesworth will experience significant growth in housing over the plan period to 2036. Whilst it is expected that these allocations will address many of Halesworth's housing needs, it is important that the Neighbourhood Plan makes clear what these needs are. Moreover, it is recognised that these allocations do not represent a ceiling on growth; there will be further growth elsewhere within the town and it is important that the particular needs of the community are signposted so that opportunities to address them are taken wherever possible.

### Profile of Halesworth's housing stock<sup>4</sup>

- 5.5 A significant proportion of Halesworth's dwelling stock are smaller properties, with 88% of properties being 3-bed or less. In particular, the 37% that are 2-bed properties is very high when compared with Suffolk and the average for England. By contrast, it is proportionately under-represented for larger properties (4-bed or more). The availability of housing stock may potentially be one reason why there are fewer families in Halesworth and high levels of older people. This is shown in Figure 5.1.

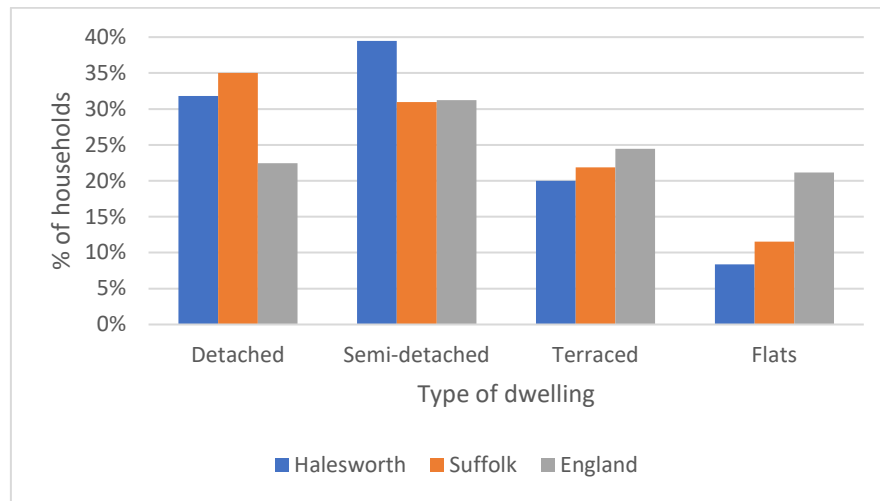
**Figure 5.1: No. of bedrooms of dwelling stock, 2011**



- 5.6 The size of dwellings largely feeds through to the type as well. Figure 5.2 shows that nearly 40% of Halesworth's properties are semi-detached, which fits with a picture of a large number of 2- and 3-bed dwellings. Nevertheless, there are still a significant number of detached dwellings (which includes bungalows).

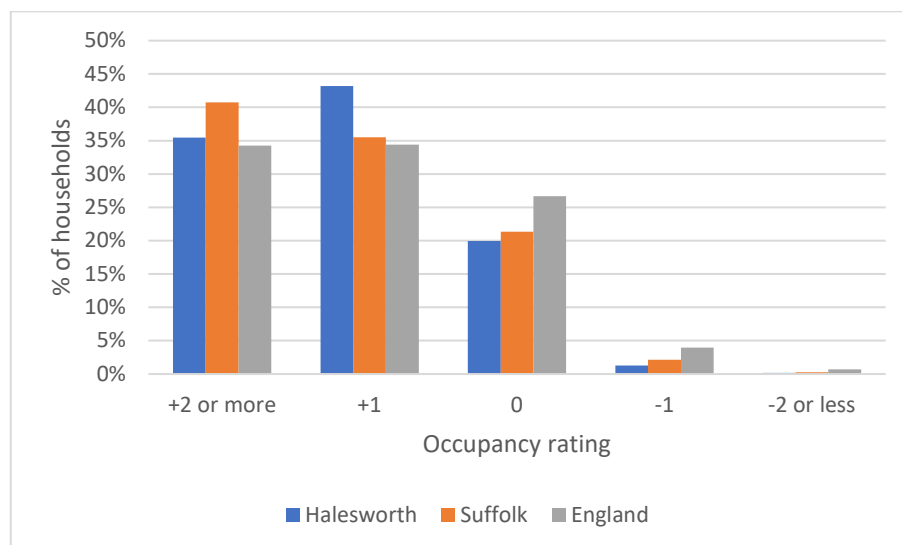
<sup>4</sup> All data in this section is from the 2011 Census, unless stated otherwise

**Figure 5.2: Type of dwelling, 2011**



- 5.7 Figure 5.3 shows the occupancy rates of housing. Halesworth is below average for significant under-occupation (2+ means having 2 or more bedrooms spare, based on the number of people in the household). It does have a lot of households that have one spare bedroom (+1 occupancy rating) but this is a common phenomenon in rural areas. This suggests that the predominance of smaller properties – particularly 2- and 3-bed properties – fits the needs of the local community.

**Figure 5.3: Occupancy rating of dwellings, 2011**



- 5.8 Over the 10-year period from December 2010 to December 2020, average house prices in the Halesworth area increased by 55% from £170,600 to £263,500<sup>5</sup>. This compares with an average increase also of 55% to £306,300 across Suffolk as a whole. In December 2020, the average price of a semi-detached property in Halesworth was £249,500, compared with £266,500 in Suffolk. So whilst Halesworth is below the Suffolk average house price, it has seen similar strong growth in

<sup>5</sup> All figures are from [www.home.co.uk](http://www.home.co.uk)

house prices. As with most places in the east of England, this has a significant impact on affordability.

- 5.9 Interviews with local estate agents and developers identified the following trends in Halesworth:
- The main demand is for 3-bed properties, followed by 4-bed properties. The demand for larger houses is growing as Halesworth becomes increasingly attractive to families and there is limited evidence of a wish to 'downsize' by existing older residents.
  - Bungalows are in high demand from the older population but there is a shortage.
  - First-time buyer interest in properties is strong in Halesworth.
  - Rental property is in very short supply.
  - An increasing demand for second homes.

## **Existing housing policy and opportunities for the Neighbourhood Plan**

- 5.10 The adopted Waveney Local Plan provides a number of strategic housing policies that seek to address housing need. The Neighbourhood Plan cannot duplicate these policies:

### **Policy WLP8.1 - Housing Mix**

- 5.11 Policy WLP8.1 of the Local Plan requires that at least 35% of new houses must be 1- or 2-bed, meaning that up to 65% of provision can be of the larger house sizes sought in Halesworth<sup>6</sup>.
- 5.12 Neighbourhood Plans are able to set out a more detailed approach to housing type and mix which reflects local circumstances and is supported by evidence. The evidence gathered through the Halesworth Housing Needs Assessment and interviews with local estate agents and developers identified two particular issues that are addressed by Policies HAL.HSG1 and HAL.HSG2 below.
- 5.13 Evidence from housebuilders suggests that they are less keen to provide 4-bed properties, so this could result in a disproportionate amount of 3-bed properties. This is despite the proportionately low amount of 4-bed properties, as shown in Figure 5.1. Moreover, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment covering the Waveney Housing Market Area identifies that there is a need for 27% of all owner-occupied housing over the period to 2040 to be 4-bed properties or larger<sup>7</sup>. Whilst there is a high proportion of retirees in Halesworth, it is important for the vibrancy of the town to attract more families, and this requires a range of family-sized housing. Four-bed units will provide spare bedrooms for most families that can be used as office spaces, which is a growing need as more people work regularly from home (including multiple workers in a single household). Policy HAL.HSG1 helps to achieve this by requiring at least 15% of all properties in a development to be 4-bed. The figure of 15% ensures that a reasonable minimum proportion of large properties on a site are provided, thereby avoiding delivery of an excess of 3-bed units.

<sup>6</sup> The policy also states that this figure could be higher if it is demonstrably unfeasible to deliver 35% 1- and 2-bed properties

<sup>7</sup> HDH Planning and Development (2017) *Ipswich and Waveney Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Volume 2*, for Suffolk Coastal District Council, Ipswich Borough Council and Waveney District Council – Table 4.4b

**POLICY HAL.HSG1: PROVISION OF LARGER HOUSING**

**In meeting the requirements of Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.1 (Housing mix), development proposals should provide a mix of larger properties (3-bed properties or larger) and, in particular, should provide at least 15% as 4-bed properties.**

- 5.14 Second, there is a demand for bungalows, although their land-hungry nature can impact on viability. The evidence base underpinning the Neighbourhood Plan suggests that there will be sufficient provision of housing for older people in Halesworth once the Local Plan allocations – and in particular the specialist provision at the Halesworth Healthy Neighbourhood – have been delivered. Moreover, Local Plan Policy WLP8.31 (Lifetime Design) already requires provision to meet the needs of older people.

**Policy WLP8.2 - Affordable Housing**

- 5.15 On sites of 11+ dwellings, at least 30% of new houses should be provided as affordable housing. Of these, 50% should be for 'affordable rent'.
- 5.16 Neighbourhood Plans can set out higher requirements for affordable housing provision and split of affordable housing by type where local evidence of need and viability support this. The Neighbourhood Plan considered whether there was sufficient evidence to justify a higher affordable housing requirement or a higher proportion of affordable housing for rent in Halesworth. The Housing Need Assessment supplied evidence of need but the viability assessment did not support any increase and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan concluded that there was no evidence to support this. However, it is considered vital that affordable housing need is delivered in full on the Local Plan allocations and where possible, a higher proportion should be provided as affordable rented properties.
- 5.17 The Neighbourhood Plan has identified other actions and mechanisms which have the potential to support local housing need over the plan period (see below).

**Windfall sites**

- 5.18 Sites that are not allocated ('windfall sites') within the settlement boundary will continue to come forward over the plan period. Many will come forward for housing-led development. The Neighbourhood Plan supports such small housing or mixed-use developments on sites that become available where such development enables the other objectives of the Plan to be delivered. For example, development may enhance the conservation area; a mixed use development may help retain employment; it may enable the provision of green spaces that are rich in biodiversity.

**POLICY HAL.HSG2: SMALL HOUSING SITES**

**Development proposals for small housing sites (10 dwellings or less) within the settlement boundary that demonstrate how they will actively address the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan will be strongly supported. In particular development proposals should:**

- a. retain or provide employment where they are mixed use developments;**
- b. provide biodiversity-rich space as appropriate to their scale, nature and location; and**
- c. where appropriate, preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.**

## Neighbourhood Plan actions to help address housing need

- 5.19 Whilst there may be insufficient evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan to justify policies, in addition to those in the Local Plan, that direct provision of new housing to meet particular needs, there are certain actions that can be undertaken to put in place other mechanisms to do so.

### Community Led Housing

- 5.20 The local community, and Halesworth Town Council as its key representative body, would have a greater influence over the occupiers of properties if they had control of the land on which they were built. Community Led Housing (CLH) is a way that this influence can be exerted on behalf of the community of Halesworth. CLH can take many forms, including Community Land Trusts, cooperatives, self-help housing, co-housing and community self-build. A CLH scheme can gain access to the Government's Community Housing Fund if it meets three criteria:
- There is meaningful community engagement and community consent occurs throughout the development process.
  - The local community group or organisation (which doesn't have to be the Town Council) manages or stewards the homes. This may be done through a mutually supported arrangement with a Registered Provider that owns the freehold or leasehold for the property.
  - The benefits to the local area or community must be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.
- 5.21 An important action will be to scope out the opportunities for a CLH scheme, both in terms of the structure and any potential sites which can deliver such development. This will help to secure homes for local people, to be provided in an appropriate way, most likely to rent. Importantly, these homes will be provided in perpetuity so when a tenant moves out, a new local tenant in need can be housed.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: COMMUNITY LED HOUSING

**Halesworth Town Council will explore the potential for Community Led Housing schemes in Halesworth.**

### Local Lettings Policy

- 5.22 Another option explored by the Neighbourhood Plan for increasing the supply of rented properties for local people is for there to be a 'Local Lettings Policy' (LLP). Unlike the coastal communities nearby (particularly Southwold and Reydon) that are faced with large numbers of second homes and holiday lets, it is not open to Halesworth to have a permanent LLP applied to new affordable rental properties.
- 5.23 However other avenues are open that can be negotiated by Halesworth Town Council when planning applications come before them. Specifically, a request could be made for LLP to be applied to all or some of the rental properties that form part of planning application, subject to Section 106 considerations.
- 5.24 The evidence gathered to date about need in Halesworth provides a good base and if this can be further supplemented over time, then there is a strong case to push for local people being given more opportunity to access these properties.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY**

**Halesworth Town Council will:**

- i. seek a Local Lettings Policy when residential planning applications, subject to Section 106 considerations, come before them for their consideration;**
- ii. continue to gather evidence on local need in order to justify inclusion of a Local Lettings Policy;**
- iii. Work with East Suffolk Council Housing Department to explore opportunities for expanding the provision of local lettings.**

**Building greener housing**

- 5.25 The need to improve the energy efficiency of the stock of residential properties is a nationwide issue as well as one in Halesworth. Building Regulations established minimum standards for the energy efficiency of properties yet, if the UK is to reduce the significant amount of energy used in construction and operation of its stock of buildings, more energy efficient buildings are required. Development to Passivhaus or equivalent widely-recognised standards will also serve to reduce (or even eliminate) energy bills for occupiers. This would represent a significant social benefit, particularly for those on low incomes in Halesworth.
- 5.26 Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.28 requires major development (defined as 10 residential properties or more or at least 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace) to submit a sustainability statement to demonstrate that development has maximised energy efficiency, used locally sourced materials, incorporates sustainable water management measures and minimises construction waste. However, a significant number of new properties in Halesworth will be on sites of less than 10 dwellings. In addition, many properties will be renovated, either to upgrade poor quality stock or to provide enlarged properties. Whilst development must remain deliverable (and improving energy efficiency as part of some minor renovation proposals which require consent in the Conservation Area may be impractical), such smaller developments should also seek to put in place measures which demonstrably maximise the efficiency of the built form. All development will be expected to comply with any uplift in Building Regulation standards that may be introduced during the plan period.

**POLICY HAL.HSG3: LOW ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSING DESIGN**

**Residential developments of less than 10 dwellings should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement that demonstrates where possible that the following measures have been incorporated:**

- a. Measures to actively minimise/improve energy efficiency relating to the heating, cooling, lighting and waste management of the buildings.**
- b. Sustainable design and construction measures including, where feasible, ground/air source heat pumps, solar panels and grey/rainwater harvesting solutions.**



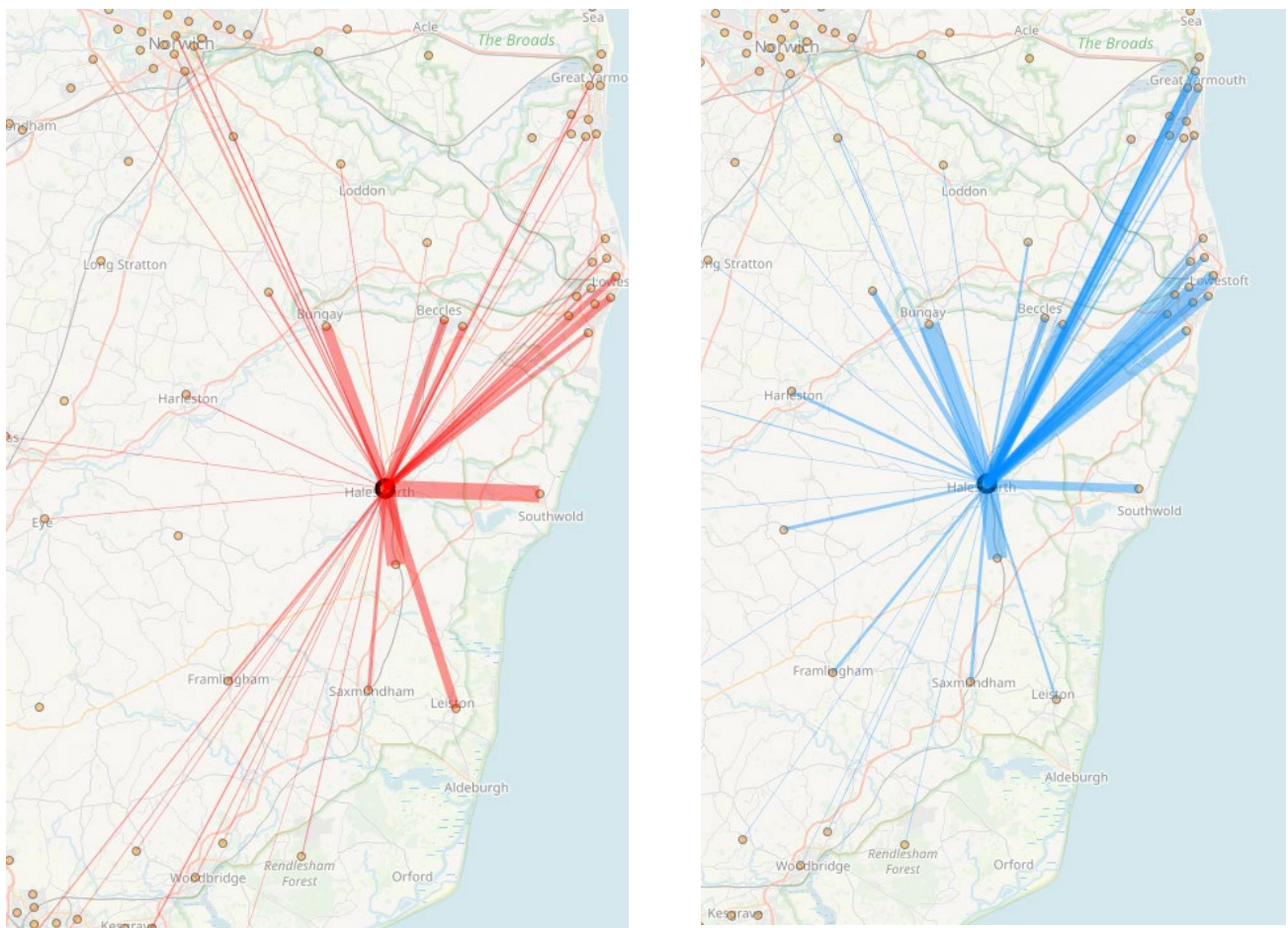
## 6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 The availability of jobs for residents and the economic sustainability of the town were important to large numbers of residents in the first consultation sessions. The NPSG set out to address this. The following objective was consulted upon and received community approval.

*To identify a range of spaces on both existing and new sites which attract businesses and create employment opportunities, particularly in skilled and creative industries and in tourism*

- 6.2 Halesworth is an employment hub for the surrounding area, bringing more people into the town to work each day than residents leaving to work in other places. The town has a high proportion of lower skilled jobs than the average for the rest of Suffolk and comparatively few professional and administrative jobs, reflecting the dominance of retail and construction employment. High numbers of those leaving for work go to Reydon and Southwold (to jobs at Adnams Brewery and more generally in tourism) and to Leiston (to jobs at Sizewell nuclear power station). This is shown in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1: Location of employment and workers, 2011**  
**Destination of workers from Halesworth**      **Origin of people working in Halesworth**



- 6.3 There are few large companies in Halesworth, with Bernard Mathews and Spectra Packaging being exceptions, and both being located in Holton outside the neighbourhood area boundary. Most of the employment is offered by small and medium sized firms (SMEs) and increasingly in micro



businesses and small start-up firms. The SMEs are mainly located on the industrial estates (at Norwich Road and Blyth Road) which offer a good range of spaces which are in high demand, and in the retail sites in the town centre. The Waveney Local Plan allocates a 2.64-hectare site for economic development adjacent to an existing industrial location on Norwich Road, just outside the neighbourhood area. This could be a logical extension of the spaces for SME development. However, office and light industrial units are increasingly in short supply, despite the continuing demand.



***Norwich Road Industrial Estate – one of three industrial estates on the edge of Halesworth***

- 6.4 The town centre in Halesworth has a good range of shops and is a valued part of what makes Halesworth an attractive place to live and visit. Like many other centres across the country, the changing ways we shop and the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on its vitality. There is a need to support the shops in the town – many of which are local independents – and to take all opportunities to improve the experience of coming to the town centre. The need to improve connectivity through the town centre and the Thoroughfare in particular is addressed elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.5 Within Halesworth town, a notable commercial land use is the presence of a number of car showrooms. This highlights one aspect of the mix of Halesworth's economy which is expected to change over the plan period. As the motor trade adapts to new demands and requirements, it is expected that they will rely on fewer showrooms focused in larger centres than Halesworth. Such sites will create opportunities to address needs and provide new opportunities in certain circumstances to deliver the types of commercial space that are likely to increase in demand in the town.

### **Small-scale workspaces and employment areas**

- 6.6 For a town such as Halesworth, economic growth is expected to come from micro-businesses<sup>8</sup>, start-ups and SMEs. Over the last few years there has been local growth in these types of businesses, particularly start-ups and micro-businesses. Estate agents reported that the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an increasing number of people moving into Halesworth, seeking properties that would allow them to continue working from home or to work flexibly. With train services providing relatively easy access to London and the major towns on the route, this makes

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<sup>8</sup> Micro-businesses are those employing 10 employees or less

such an approach more feasible. Policy HAL.ED1 sets out to address these important matters in supporting the development of small-scale offices and workshops. Whilst commercial lease arrangements are not directly land use matters, the Town Council would encourage developers to offer flexible arrangement to companies to help to stimulate the local economy and promote new and growing businesses.

- 6.7 The growth of these types of businesses requires suitable premises – small, flexible spaces, including those that can be shared or used for networking that are well-located in the town. Whilst the ESC Economic Growth Plan<sup>9</sup> states the importance of supporting entrepreneurs, encouraging existing businesses to grow, and attracting businesses to the area, there is growing pressure to development commercial uses into residential. Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.12 (Existing Employment Areas) protects the two main employment areas and only allows development for alternative uses if it can be demonstrated, through active marketing, that there is no demand for them. However, smaller scale spaces that are not in designated employment areas have less protection. Often, in terms of the land and space occupied, these are on a very small scale. Miles Ward Court is one such example, accommodating six small business enterprises but recently having been under threat of redevelopment to housing. The space it provides is invaluable and whilst it continues to provide space for these businesses at the current time, its loss would result in a number of businesses having to relocate, potentially away from Halesworth. This matter is addressed in Part B of Policy HAL.ED1. For the purpose of the policy existing employment sites are defined as the employment sites identified in Policy WLP8.12 of the Local Plan and the Small-Scale Employment Areas identified in Part C of Policy HAL.ED1.



*Miles Ward Court – small enterprise spaces in a listed courtyard*

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Business/East-Suffolk-Growth-Plan.pdf>

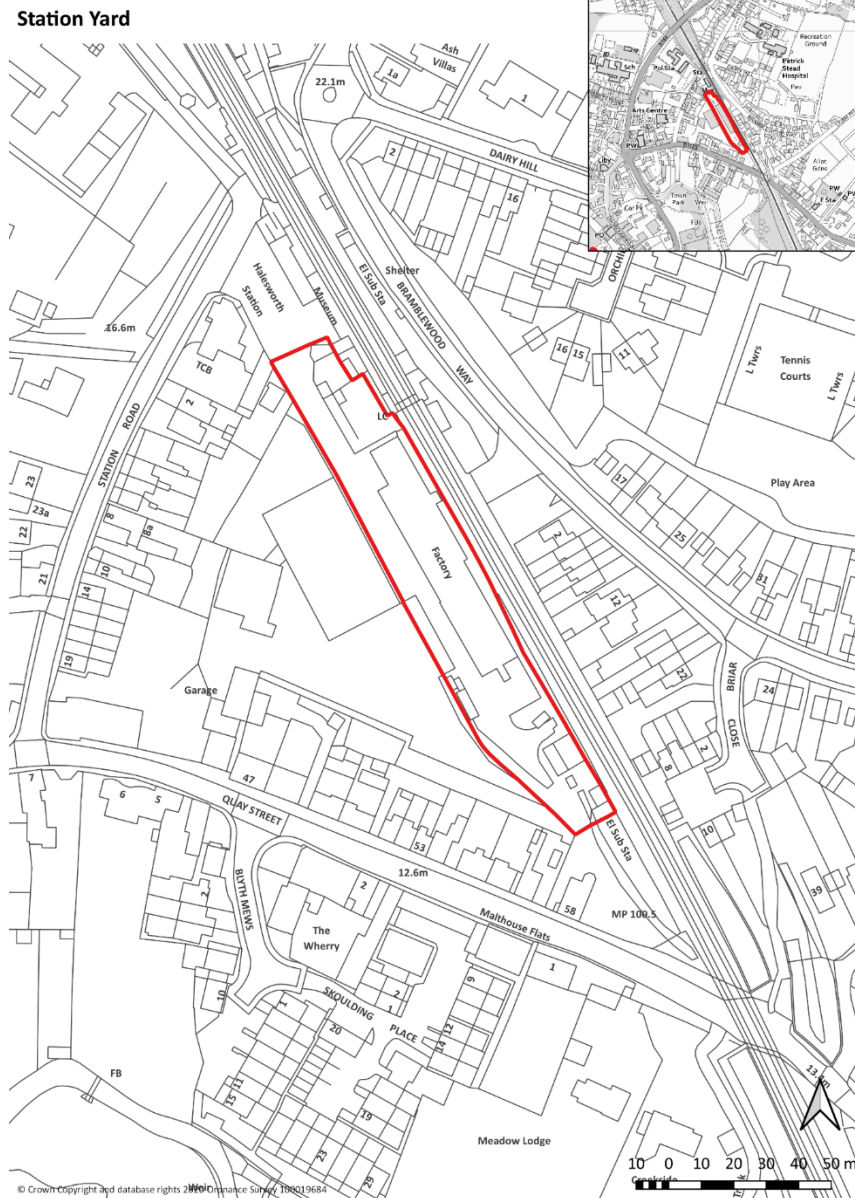
Miles Ward Court



- 6.8 Similarly the Station Yard workshops provide valuable business workspace on a small scale that is considered to merit protection.



*Workshops at Station yard with a Maltings building opposite*



- 6.9 For the purposes of applying the policy, a Small Scale Employment Area is defined as a site covering an area of 5,000m<sup>2</sup> or less (0.5 hectares) or floorspace of 4,000m<sup>2</sup> or less.
- 6.10 Along with small-scale spaces, growing businesses have a need to move into larger premises. For those small businesses that started in micro-scale spaces, they are looking for 'move-on' space – space of the same type but more suited to the needs of a larger business. This is typically dedicated floorspace of between 200m<sup>2</sup> and 1,000m<sup>2</sup> but depends on the type of business; micro businesses will typically be looking at the lower end of that range and early-stage SMEs at the upper end.



**POLICY HALE.D1: SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL WORKSPACES AND EMPLOYMENT AREAS**

- A. Within the settlement boundary of Halesworth development proposals for small-scale offices/workspaces designed for the creation and growth of start-up and micro-businesses will be supported.**

**Where relevant, such provision will be supported where they arise as part of a mix of uses. Such a mix of uses which includes residential uses will only be supported where this is necessary to make the overall scheme viable and where the residential floorspace is less than 25% of the overall total floorspace delivered. Proposals involving residential use should demonstrate that they will both minimise the impact of employment use on residential amenity and not hinder the ability of the occupiers of the employment premises to carry out business activities.**

- B. The provision of employment space to serve the needs of existing and growing businesses in Halesworth on existing employment sites will be supported.**

- C. The following locations shown on the Policies Map are identified as Small Scale Employment Areas:**

- a. Miles Ward Court**
- b. Station Yard**

- D. Within the Small Scale Employment Areas identified in clause C, proposals involving the loss of existing office, research and development or light industrial employment premises will only be supported where the following criteria have been met:**

- 1. marketing evidence is provided which demonstrates the premises have been marketed for a sustained period of 12 months in accordance with the requirements set out in Appendix 4 of the Waveney Local Plan; and**
- 2. the proposed use is compatible with the surrounding uses in terms of car parking, access, noise, odour and other amenity concerns.**

## **Tourism and creative industries**

- 6.11 With the 'staycation' movement, interest in arts and culture, wildlife and biodiversity and activities such as walking and cycling, Halesworth has a lot to offer. Being near but not on the coast is an advantage for these 'softer' tourist pursuits. Tourism boosts the service industries that underpin it, such as restaurants, galleries, antiques and shopping. For tourism to grow and for Halesworth to become a place more tourists want to stay, there needs to be an increase in accommodation (currently there is one small hotel and one restaurant with guest rooms in the town), better connectivity to and from the Thoroughfare - the shopping, eating and cultural heart of the town - and better signage to make it easier for people to take advantage of what is on offer. Evidence gathered from interviews with existing shop owners attests to this.



***A selection of antique shops, cafes, restaurants and hotels that serves the tourism industry***

- 6.12 Whilst no specific sites are available for allocation to deliver such uses, there are a number of large sites within the town that could, if they come forward during the plan period, support such opportunities. This is addressed under 'Major development opportunities'.
- 6.13 Along with these opportunities, there is a need to provide improved connectivity and signage, both within and to the town. This is addressed in more detail in the section on the Town Centre.
- 6.14 Data from the 2011 Census indicates that Halesworth has a higher proportion of people working in the creative, art and leisure sectors than in the rest of the Suffolk. The town is a part of a

recognised artistic East Suffolk community. The Cut Arts Centre, the Halesworth Gallery, small commercial galleries and art shops create an art infrastructure that attracts visitors and contributes to the local economy. The Halesworth Healthy Neighbourhood plans incorporate art and performance on the site. A report by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)<sup>10</sup> highlights the importance of culture and art for economic growth in the area. With support and recognition this sector could be expanded which would offer more jobs and encourage further tourism.



*A pottery shop on Bridge Street and Halesworth Art Gallery in 16th Century Almshouses*

- 6.15 A small survey of those in the sector for the Neighbourhood Plan identified a need for studio/workshop spaces and places to show and sell. Such spaces should be encouraged on mixed use development sites in the town. This could follow the example of the Art Station on the High Street in Saxmundham, which has recently created work studios, networking spaces, a dance studio and exhibition space.

#### **POLICY HAL.ED2: TOURISM AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

- A. Within the settlement boundary, proposals to improve and enhance the tourism offer and the creative industries sector in Halesworth will be supported. In particular, proposals to deliver studio/workshop/gallery space will be strongly supported.**
- B. Proposals for hotel accommodation within Halesworth town centre will be supported. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable sites are available within the town centre, proposals for hotel accommodation within the settlement boundary will be supported.**

<sup>10</sup> New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (2016) *Culture Drives Growth: The East's Cultural Strategy: 2016-2022*

## **Major development opportunities**

- 6.16 The development of the Neighbourhood Plan has involved extensive engagement with a wide variety of owners of major sites in Halesworth. The Site Options Appraisal report that informed the plan assessed a number of sites identified by the Neighbourhood Plan Group. These sites were all considered as being suitable or potentially suitable for mixed use development with housing included in order to enhance site viability. At the present time few of these sites are explicitly available for mixed use development within the town. However, over the lifetime of the plan, it is likely that a number of these sites could come forward for development. This could be for a variety of reasons including changes in commercial markets or opportunities to make more efficient use of land close to the centre of Halesworth. Certainly if Halesworth's offer allows it to thrive, then its attractiveness to commercial businesses and residents (to spend money in the town) will increase which could increase financial incentives to bring land forward for development.
- 6.17 In this regard, it is important that growth and change of Halesworth provides an appropriate balance of uses and activities. The Waveney Local Plan allocates sufficient sites to deliver one of the primary needs in the area, housing. However to allow a community to thrive, this must be complemented by a range of other uses. Within the settlement boundary, this should include commercial, leisure-related and community activities as well as housing. This is particularly the case on sites where there were previously commercial activities as this will ensure that the commercial base of the town is maintained and potentially enhanced. Moreover, whilst the base of community facilities in Halesworth is already strong and varied, with further provision proposed on the sites allocated in the Local Plan, large sites within the settlement boundary offer potentially one-time opportunities for step-change improvements. One such example that has been considered through the Neighbourhood Plan is the creation of some form of secondary education which the town lacks.
- 6.18 Major development is defined in the NPPF as (i) housing development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more; or (ii) non-residential development that creates additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or the site has an area of 1 hectare or more. Proposals for major development of sites that come forward within the settlement boundary and are not allocated for residential or employment use in the Waveney Local Plan are expected to consider a mix of uses on the site. Given the importance of commercial employment identified in the plan, this should consider the provision of employment space (particularly which meets the need of the start-up/micro-business sector), but should also consider, as appropriate, uses including retail, creative, community, leisure and tourism. Where these sites are within or immediately adjacent to the town centre boundary, they should also consider the provision of public space and the need for linkages through the town centre (this is addressed in more detail in the Halesworth Town Centre chapter).
- 6.19 It is acknowledged that in many cases, residential uses are needed to ensure the viability of a mixed use scheme. Proposals that include residential uses are therefore encouraged, provided that this does not dominate the scheme and limit the potential for the other uses in the mix to prosper by virtue of their limited scale.



**POLICY HAL.ED3: MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

**A. Within the settlement boundary of Halesworth, major development proposals (as defined in the NPPF) on sites not allocated in the Waveney Local Plan for residential or employment uses will be supported where they deliver a mix of the uses identified below:**

- 1. small scale commercial workshops and workspaces, with associated meeting space**
- 2. community uses**
- 3. housing, included live-work units and/or supported housing**
- 4. education uses**
- 5. tourism activities**
- 6. studio/workshop/gallery space**
- 7. cultural and creative activities**

**Proposals should seek to ensure that no particular use dominates the scheme mix such that it is likely to limit the potential for the other uses in the mix to prosper by virtue of their limited scale.**

**B. Major development proposals within or adjacent to the town centre boundary of Halesworth, as shown on the Policies Map, should demonstrate the way in which they have incorporated public open space and improved pedestrian linkages into the Primary Shopping Area into their overall designs and layouts.**

- 6.20 A significant proportion of the community has identified that a need for Halesworth is a new supermarket. The Waveney Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016<sup>11</sup> assessed that Halesworth did have a need for 126m<sup>2</sup> of convenience retail (i.e. food store) floorspace. The current long term car park site in the town centre (accessed off Saxons Way) is seen as providing an opportunity to deliver such a requirement. Outline planning permission was granted for a retail foodstore on the site in 2002 but was not taken further. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment identified the long term car park site as a significant opportunity to provide new retail and/or leisure-led development. There is, at the present time, interest by a supermarket operator, and a planning application is expected in 2022.
- 6.21 For such an important location within the town centre, the site provides an opportunity to deliver this but it should not only provide a supermarket and parking. It provides an opportunity, through good design, to deliver a wider range of uses (including further retail space, workshops, housing and community uses), improved connectivity to the town centre and a high quality public open space.
- 6.22 The Neighbourhood Plan has maintained ongoing dialogue with the developer in respect of these proposals, with the intention of pushing to ensure that any scheme maximises the potential to contribute towards the objectives of the Plan. Given the advanced nature of proposals, it is not appropriate to have a site-specific policy about this in the Plan. However, the Town Council will continue to engage with the developer to secure the most beneficial outcome.

<sup>11</sup> Carter Jonas (2017) *Waveney Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment*, for Waveney District Council (now East Suffolk Council)

## Long term car park site



### **NON-POLICY ACTION: LONG TERM CAR PARK SITE**

**Halesworth Town Council will engage with the landowner/promoter of development of the long term car park site in Halesworth town centre to ensure that development proposals address the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.**

## 7 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- 7.1 The Neighbourhood Plan community consultations showed residents greatly value Halesworth's community infrastructure as part of what makes the town such an attractive place to live. The growth in population will create a need to improve and expand the community infrastructure offer. The objective therefore is:

***Provide a wider range of better-quality community, sport / leisure and education facilities for all ages***

### **Play spaces**

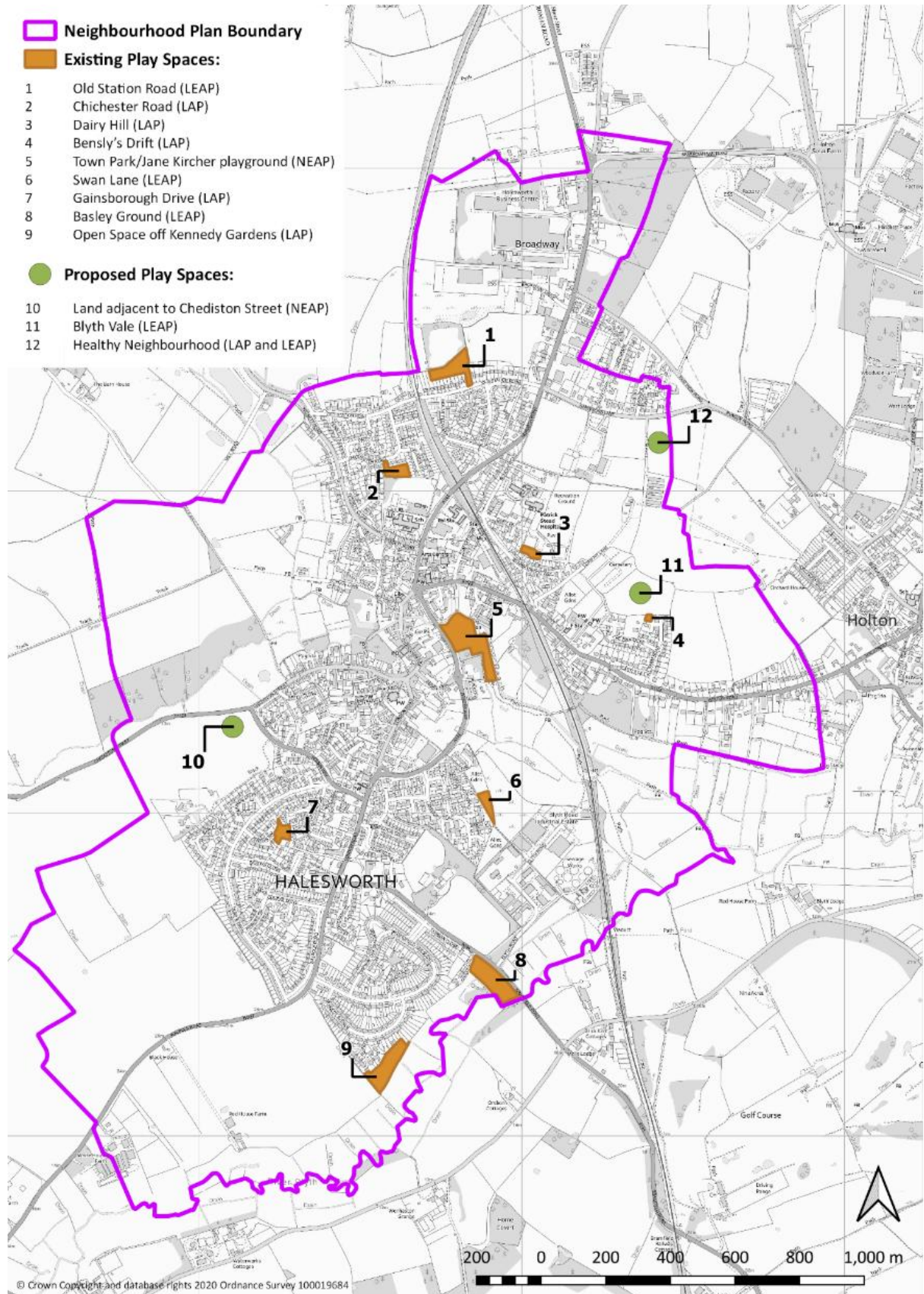
- 7.2 Coupled with the objective to enhance Halesworth's green spaces so that it can become a greener town with a higher quality natural environment, it is important that the public spaces in the town provide quality facilities that will make people want to come and use them.
- 7.3 The current and proposed play areas are shown in Figure 7.1. The Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment 2015<sup>12</sup> noted that provision was above the recommended standard, based on the population at the time although equipment was only of medium or low quality. The Local Plan site allocations will increase provision: a new Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) at Chediston Street in the southwest of the town, aimed at older children is to be provided; Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP), catering for children up to 8, are planned at Blyth View/Hill Farm Road in the east and in the Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood/Harrisons Lane in the north. The latter will also provide a Local Area for Play (LAP).
- 7.4 A number of these existing play spaces are considered by the community to be of poor quality, either due to being in a poor state of repair or having a limited range of play equipment. This assessment was supported by a 2017 report undertaken for Waveney District Council<sup>13</sup>. Since that time there have been no improvements in the quality of existing provision, except for the Swan Lane LEAP, which has been improved through some basic maintenance and tree planting.
- 7.5 Consultation with children aged 10 and 11 highlighted the lack of spaces and equipment geared towards the older age group. The one NEAP in the Town Park, which has a skate park and half basketball court, is popular but needs much improvement. The children were clear as to what they wanted - zip wires, climbing frames / walls / adventure course, slides and swings (differing sizes for different age groups).
- 7.6 In light of the growth proposed in the Waveney Local Plan and the desire by the community to have a wider range of good quality play facilities in easily accessible locations across Halesworth, the approach in the Neighbourhood Plan is to develop three existing play spaces in strategically geographical located areas as NEAPs. These are:
- Old Station Road (north) – at present a LEAP
  - Town Park & 'Jane Kircher' (central) - at present a NEAP but the equipment for the older age group is inadequate
  - Chediston Street (south west) – the proposed NEAP but issues of connectivity and accessibility need to be addressed.

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<sup>12</sup> Waveney District Council (2015) *Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment*

<sup>13</sup> Sentinel Leisure Trust (2017) *Play Space Evaluation Report and Action Plan*, for Waveney District Council

**Figure 7.1: Location of existing play areas serving Halesworth**





- The two existing sites need investment in new equipment suited to the target age group. The proposed space on the Chediston development could offer good facilities but will be limited in its appeal and usefulness to a wider group of children unless two issues of connectivity are properly addressed: Firstly, it should cater for the wider community and specifically, existing housing in and around the Dukes Drive area. This need was identified in the Waveney Council Open Space Needs Assessment (2015) report and the Local Plan Policy WLP 4.2 (and paragraph 4.20). To achieve this objective, consideration would need to be given to creating a connecting route, for pedestrians and cyclist, through either Barley Meadow or Allington Road open space. Both are feasible. From Dukes Drive near to the Barley Meadow turning the distance to the proposed playground via Dukes Drive and Roman Way would be a 1km journey. With the proposed path via Barley meadow this is reduced to 0.38km making it much more accessible for local children. Without these access improvements parents may be inclined to drive to the Town Park.
- Secondly, its location on the other side of the busy Roman Way makes it potentially unsafe and inaccessible for many older children. A form of controlled crossing should be provided at an appropriate place on Roman Way, to enable pedestrians, cyclists and car drivers to be aware of each other's presence

- 7.7 The remaining play areas in the town should all be maintained as Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) or Local Areas for Play (LAPs) The possible exception is Bensly's Drift which has very limited, poor quality provision and will, in effect, be replaced by the new play area located in the new Blyth View housing development. The Local Plan Policy WLP8.23 (Protection of open space) which has a presumption against the loss of any open space or community sport and recreation facilities other than where an assessment demonstrates that the open space is no longer needed or where the space will be replaced by an equivalent in a location equally accessible to the community.
- 7.8 Local play spaces can also act as open-air places where adults, including parents, can gather and walk. The Kennedy Close/Avenue LAP is located where the Neighbourhood Plan proposes an option for access to the proposed nature reserve, and the linking piece of land between the LAPs in Gainsborough Drive and Jermyn Way allow good connectivity in that part of town. The town council has undergone a survey of residents near to all open spaces, including those with play equipment, asking what they would like to see in the local space near to them, whether bird boxes, trees, benches, wildflowers, dog bins and better equipment. A costed plan for these improvements has been produced.
- 7.9 Proposals that help this strategy for improving play provision and improves facilities for adults to enjoy the open spaces will be supported. On sites where East Suffolk Council retains ownership, the Town Council will work with ESC to secure agreement to such improvements. Community Infrastructure Levy funds could be called upon.

#### **POLICY HAL.COM1: PLAY FACILITIES**

**Proposals to expand and/or improve existing play facilities to a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) standard will be supported in the following locations:**

- 1. Old Station Road**
- 2. Town Park & 'Jane Kircher'**
- 3. Chediston Street (Local Plan Policy WLP4.2))**

**NON-POLICY ACTION: FUNDING IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PLAY FACILITIES**

**Halesworth Town Council will use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to improve the quality of existing Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Local Areas for Play (LAPs) in Halesworth.**

## Education

- 7.10 Access to education is an issue of particular significance in Halesworth. The town does not have a secondary school, the nearest being in Bungay and Beccles. As a result, many children have to get the bus to school; in 2021/22, it will cost Suffolk County Council over £900 per pupil per year to provide school bus transport (source: Suffolk County Council). As of June 2019, 88% of secondary school pupils from Halesworth attended Bungay High School.
- 7.11 Whilst it is acknowledged that the provision of secondary education is a strategic matter and therefore not an issue that the Neighbourhood Plan can necessarily directly address, the need for local secondary education provision increases and likely to continue to do so over the lifetime of the plan. As noted in Section 2, Halesworth has low levels of educational attainment and a high proportion of unskilled or low skilled workers. Central Halesworth is one of the 20% most deprived areas for employment in the country. It is recognised that, whilst not the determining factor in this, secondary education is likely to be a major contributing factor as to why this is the case.
- 7.12 The Neighbourhood Plan does not look to allocate a site for a new school. However, it does look to promote and support the principal of a new secondary school in Halesworth. In the current English education system, there is the potential for a free school which would be delivered and run outside of education authority control. With this in mind, the NPSG initially engaged with SCC and thereafter, the Seckford Education Trust (SET), to establish the potential to deliver a free school in Halesworth. SET is an academy that runs four schools in Suffolk, including SET Beccles School, and was established to set up and run free schools in Suffolk. At a later point, discussions were widened to include Asset Education, the academy which manages the Edgar Sewter Primary School. The proposal to develop a new school would, by its nature, be a long term project but meanwhile, it is important that the strategy for education in Suffolk meets the needs of the community of Halesworth as much as any other part of the county. Adding to the case for local provision, the Neighbourhood Plan supports SCC in its role as education authority to develop an education strategy which ensures that children have to travel as little as possible to go to school.
- 7.13 The complexities of education provision means that a range of partners need to be involved to consider major projects such as a new school. These include the statutory authority (SCC), the planning authority (ESC) and the local school providers. As discussions were progressing it became apparent that neither SCC or ESC could support a new school given their school number projections and the planning requirements and on the basis of this SET decided to withdraw from the discussions. The focus has now shifted to looking at how current provision could be better tailored to better meet the needs of Halesworth's young people. To this effect, a working party is proposed which will involve key stakeholders.
- 7.14 The Local Plan recognises the need for under-fives pre-school provision (Policy WLP4.5) and the possibility of it being located on the same site as the community centre on the Dairy Farm site (see paragraph 7.15 below). The Neighbourhood Plan strongly supports such provision and stresses the need for close and cooperative working between Halesworth Town Council and Suffolk County Council if the two resources are to be provided in the same building.

**NON-POLICY ACTION: SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN HALESWORTH**

**Halesworth Town Council will support proposals for an education-based working group, hosted by EAST, including relevant stakeholders, to address the needs of Halesworth secondary school aged children, improving their options and opportunities, including the amelioration of travel costs associated with A-level students.**

## **Other leisure opportunities**

- 7.15 Engagement by the NPSG with the community and younger people in particular identified that many people have leisure interests that go beyond the usual sports/leisure considerations. In particular, young people wanted a 'gaming café' in the town centre where they could meet. Changes to the Use Classes Order provides a lot of flexibility as to what shop units can be used for without the need for planning permission. Therefore such a use can occupy a unit in the town centre without restriction.
- 7.16 Local Plan Policy WLP8.22 (Built Community Services and Facilities) supports the provision of new facilities. Moreover, it only allows the loss of an existing built community facility if it is demonstrated that there is no longer a need and its existing use is not viable. Re-provision of an existing facility to an equivalent standard in an alternative location in the vicinity is acceptable.
- 7.17 The Local Plan allocation at the Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood proposes a range of new community facilities, replacement of the Apollo Youth Club and retention of existing sports and play facilities at Dairy Hill. In addition, the allocation at Dairy Farm requires land for the provision of a community centre. Therefore whilst the policy requirements to deliver improved and expanded community and leisure facilities are in place, the Neighbourhood Plan wishes to reinforce the following fundamental principles:
- There is strong support for the provision of a new community centre. Paragraph 4.36 of the Local Plan states that housing is allocated on the Dairy Farm site in order to help deliver the community centre and a comprehensive approach for both housing and community facilities should be taken. The community centre is to be funded in full through a combination of district and neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies, with any external funding secured enabling an enhanced level of provision. In order to move the scheme forward, more community consultation is needed to establish what residents and the Town Council would wish to see provided in a new centre. It will be important that the Town Council leads on this community consultation.
  - The Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood allocation in the Local Plan is for a mix of housing and other uses, including leisure and sports facilities. To date, a number of planning applications have been submitted but more work is needed to ensure that all the requirements of the local plan allocation are met. For the community of Halesworth, the need to ensure that the community, leisure and sports facilities are delivered in full is of fundamental importance.
  - The Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood allocation in the Local Plan is also expected to re-provide a space for the Apollo Youth Club. However, it is not clear how such

provision will be funded. This element has to be considered by Halesworth Town Council, Halesworth Volunteers Centre (HVC), ESC and SCC, with the Town Council having formally resolved to take the lead. However, there is also an issue as to whether a 'bricks and mortar' solution is the right one. There is supposed to be a working group considering these matters. For the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan, this matter can only be referenced in the strongest terms, to urge this working group to make speedy progress. As part of this process, it is vital that young people in Halesworth are fully consulted.

**NON-POLICY ACTION: COMMUNITY CENTRE REQUIREMENTS**

**Halesworth Town Council will lead on consultation with the local community, including young people in particular, regarding the requirements for a new community centre on the land at Dairy Farm.**



## 8 DESIGN AND HERITAGE

- 8.1 In the first round of consultations residents were asked 'what do you like most about living in Halesworth?' A high proportion mentioned the historic buildings and the feel of the Thoroughfare and wanted them protected.

- 8.2 A noted visitor to the town, Simon Knott, writing about Suffolk Churches in 2007 expressed the view of many:

*Halesworth's main street, the Thoroughfare, is one of Suffolk's best-kept secrets. It is the prettiest and most interesting main street of any of East Anglia's smaller towns. An unequalled range of 17th, 18th and 19th century frontages....<sup>14</sup>*

- 8.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has therefore identified the following objective which was supported by a large majority of respondents:

***To maintain and enhance the character and heritage of Halesworth's built environment whilst encouraging sympathetic contemporary design in new developments.***

### Design

- 8.4 In order to establish the key aspects that the design of new buildings or refurbishments need to take into consideration in order to preserve and enhance the character of Halesworth, a Design Guide Report<sup>15</sup> was commissioned. Its aim is to ensure that new development – particularly housing - in the town reflects its essential character. However, this does not mean that all new developments should copy the design of the past but rather that an appreciation of traditional architecture combined with thoughtful application of modern building techniques and suitable materials should provide the basic inspiration for new developments.
- 8.5 Modern building can be from one extreme of the very modern employing new materials, technologies and forms through to accurate reproductions. The vast majority of the new estates in the town fall between the two – mainstream traditional - using brick and tile and mass-produced materials. These provide comfortable and affordable homes but can result in a uniformity and a lack of pleasing detail or appreciation of the environment and location.
- 8.6 The incorporation of traditional local features together with simple but well-established architectural principles of form, scale and detail along with sympathetic materials, varied roofscapes and layouts will help create a more varied and interesting environment. Policy HAL.DH1 sets out the Plan's approach to this matter. All major residential development proposals should include a proportionate statement and illustrations demonstrating how the principles and guidance in the Halesworth Design Guide have been addressed.
- 8.7 An example of how architectural principles can be used to create more varied buildings is the Library. Constructed in the late twentieth century, to the design of the Suffolk County Architect, it is a model for contemporary design in an historic urban environment. It has a strong modern element – the fully glazed elevation – and has been harmoniously combined with a traditional roof form and finish. It follows the street pattern well and the adjoining historic frontages.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> AECOM (2020) *Halesworth Design Guide*, for the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – <https://halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2020/02/Design-Codes-Report-PDF-Final.pdf>



*The library*

- 8.8 Below are some examples of houses that could create a more interesting environment in Halesworth than the rather formulaic new-build housing that has predominated over recent years:



*Small house in Halesworth where the varied roof line and use of materials contrasts well but does not compete with or copy the adjoining traditional listed cottage*



*New social housing in Framlingham where the houses sit well on the hill side and use sympathetic brick to good effect*



*Good examples of high quality contemporary design:  
Terraced housing in Southwold      Refurbished house in Woodbridge*

- 8.9 Generally, the Design Guide should inform development in Halesworth but more specifically it has been used to develop a series of fundamental design principles that reflect the character of Halesworth. They are important because they will help to create a consistent and high-quality standard of design. This aligns with Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.29 (Design) which requires development to demonstrate high quality design which reflects local distinctiveness.
- 8.10 Along with the Design Guide, the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas<sup>16</sup> provides some useful guidelines on design, despite its age. It is in the process of being superseded by a new Design

<sup>16</sup> Suffolk County Council (2000) *Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas*, supplementary planning guidance adopted by East Suffolk Council (<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/suffolk-design-guide-for-residential-areas/>)



Initiative. The ESC Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document also contains useful advice on many heritage matters<sup>17</sup>.

- 8.11 The Design Guide has identified specific design matters that are addressed under a number of headings as follows:

**Townscape structure and settlement pattern**

- 8.12 Recent new development has not followed the historic street pattern, favouring culs-de-sac which lack walkable and cyclable connectivity. Proposals should ensure that:

- the development integrates with and enhances the form of its existing surroundings;
- road patterns should ensure permeability for cyclists and pedestrians;
- streets should curve and bend to provide interest and a sequence of views;
- they are responsive to the historic layout of the town including plot widths, proportions, density, allowing for modern needs such as power charging units for on street parking areas;
- they relate to and where possible enhance the setting and context within which the application site is set. Proposals should complement the local character.



*Culs de sac and examples of better connectivity*

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Historic-Environment-SPD/Historic-Environment-SPD-reduced.pdf>

### **Pattern and layout of buildings**

8.13 Houses in the central parts of Halesworth have frontages which define the edges of public realm whereas houses further out are set behind front gardens. The intricate network of streets and pedestrian routes within the historic core create interesting views and a varied street scene including houses tucked behind other houses in almost courtyard-type alleyways. Future built form in these areas, if appropriate, should follow the existing pattern of development. A range of densities, house types and plot layouts should be used, mirroring that which exists throughout Halesworth. Proposals should ensure that:

- they meaningfully connect with existing routes, entrances and patterns of movement;
- densities should be similar to those in the surrounding area, generally reducing as one moves from town centre to town centre periphery and then to the outlying residential areas.

### **Building line and boundary treatments**

8.14 Building lines in the centre of town are clearly defined and should be retained in all future development proposals. In contrast, the building lines in residential developments on the periphery of Halesworth are reinforced by boundary treatments such as low walls, railings or hedgerows. The building lines to these buildings are set back from the kerb and contain gardens or driveways. Future development in these areas should continue to provide a mix of boundary treatments in line with the existing character of Halesworth. Proposals should ensure that:

- the ratio of building to garden in proposed development should reflect that of the existing dwelling;
- common boundary treatments are used (including modern and innovative designs) as long as they are complementary to the neighbouring streets and enhance the character of the town, e.g. brick walls rather than close board fencing;
- the materials proposed for new boundary treatment should be of high quality, respond to the character of the buildings in the area and have strong attention to architectural detailing in both modern and traditional materials, e.g. brick 'crinkle crinkle' walls;
- active frontages outside independent shops and cafes along Bridge Street and Thoroughfare are retained and enhanced;
- boundary treatments reinforce the continuity of the building line along a street;
- street furniture enhances the character and complements the existing historic street furniture including the lighting, seating and signage; and
- there is sufficient provision for management of household waste and recycling (including kerbside collection) without adverse impact on the local environment and neighbours.



*Brick and railing frontages along Quay Street*



*Old and new boundary treatments showing minimal use of structural boundaries in the modern developments*

### **Building heights and roofline**

8.15 Building heights vary across Halesworth creating a diverse range of roof heights and pitches resulting in a characterful skyline across the town. Future developments should retain and enhance this aspect of Halesworth skyline. Taller buildings are present in the centre of town with none exceeding three storeys and two storey residential developments are typical throughout the rest of Halesworth. Proposals should ensure that:

- building heights should reflect the prevailing height of surrounding buildings unless through assessment it can be demonstrated that taller buildings will preserve or enhance the local character. Any identified impacts to the setting or neighbouring buildings should be mitigated;
- roofs should respect the existing roofscape that consists mostly of pitched and hipped roofs;
- dormers should not be out of proportion with the original building. Materials and architectural detailing should respond to the type and scale of the host building; and
- a diversity of frontage, scale and form of development will be the best way to creating a well-integrated development which fits into the existing urban fabric and compliments the existing character of Halesworth.



*Roofline to buildings along London Road*





*Roof lines in new developments in Halesworth*

## Materials

8.16 As with many of the local market towns, the best of Halesworth's buildings have a strong materials palette distinctive to Suffolk. Such a palette should be incorporated into new proposals. Materials need to be of high quality and reflect the vernacular and materials inherent in Halesworth providing an authentic development which would enhance the local character and should look to include modern sustainable materials where possible. Further guidance is provided in the Halesworth Design Guide. The following materials that are commonly found in Halesworth being considered part of the palette of materials, although others may be appropriate if they are part of the local vernacular:

- Roof materials: red clay plain tiles, red clay pantiles, black glazed pantiles with some Welsh slate, red brick chimney stacks, grey-red clay plain tiles, red clay pantiles. Light coloured or brown tiles should be avoided. Guttering and rain water pipes should be round and black.



*Different types of roof tile in Halesworth*

- Building materials: clay bricks Suffolk whites, soft red), proper brick bond occasionally with feature banding. Painted lime plaster finished in locally prevalent earth colour wash, timber frame.



*Types of building facades in Halesworth*

- Concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows or doors should be avoided. Natural materials such as wood and new materials such as zinc and cross-laminated timber could add to the range of materials in use in developments.

### **Public buildings**

- 8.17 Development over the plan period will not only consist of housing. Indeed, the Local plan requirement for a new community centre and pre-school setting at Dairy Farm will mean the delivery of new public buildings. Other buildings may become available for redevelopment. The much-loved Halesworth Library, illustrated above, is an excellent example of contemporary design on a public building. It is important that publicly commissioned buildings look to employ high quality design and materials and are seen as an opportunity for innovative contemporary design.

#### **POLICY HAL.DH1: DESIGN**

- A. Development should demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the local character of Halesworth identified in the Halesworth Design Guide. This includes the development of public buildings.**
- B. In delivering high quality design, development proposals should demonstrate the appropriate use of design, layout, materials and features. As appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development proposals concerned, the following principles should be considered as part of design proposals:**
- 1. Development should integrate with and enhance the form of its existing surroundings, with all connections including road patterns ensuring permeability for cyclists and pedestrians.**
  - 2. A range of densities, house types (where appropriate) and plot layouts should be used.**
  - 3. Building lines in the town centre should be preserved. Elsewhere, boundary treatments such as low walls, railings or hedgerows should be used to define the plot boundaries.**
  - 4. Building heights and rooflines should provide diversity of frontage, scale and form, with building heights that reflect the prevailing height of surrounding buildings unless it can be demonstrated that a taller building could complement or enhance the local character.**
  - 5. Provision of roof and building materials that reflect the local Suffolk palette. The choice of materials is expected to minimise the carbon footprint of development.**
  - 6. Parking to support residential uses should be provided within the development and should include a proportion of well-designed on-street parking provisions, in accordance with Suffolk County Council parking standards.**



## Views and gateways to Halesworth town



8.18 This aerial view shows how Halesworth nestles around the Church Tower and is exceptionally well contained within the surrounding agricultural countryside and around the watercourses that lead into the Town River bisecting the centre.

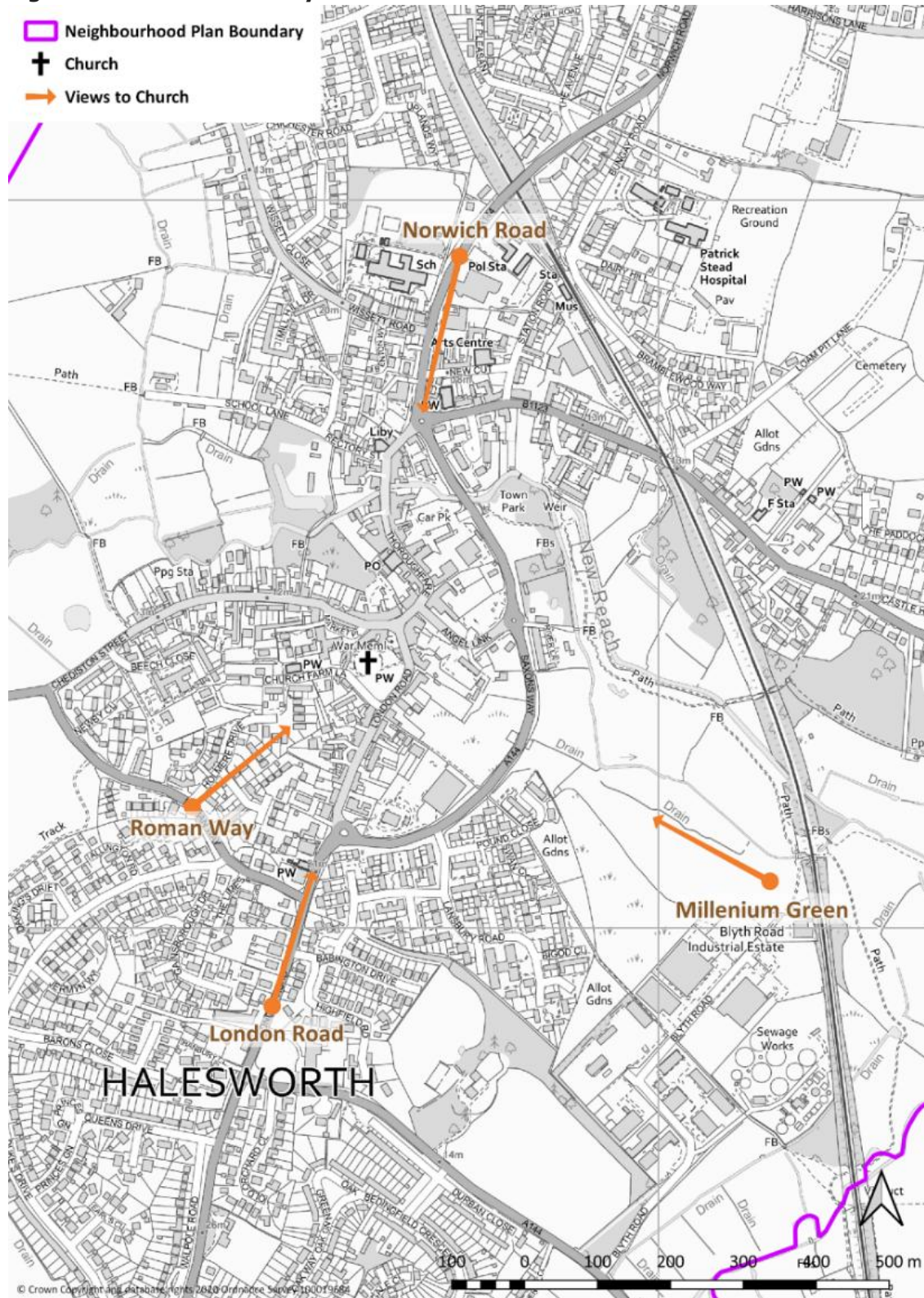


*Views of St Mary's Church tower (clockwise from top left): from the Millennium Green in winter, up the hill on Norwich Road, London Road and Roman Way*



- 8.19 St Mary's Church is the major landmark in the town and it is considered important, in order to preserve the character of Halesworth, to protect the views of the Church Tower as you enter the town. The specific viewpoints are shown in Figure 8.1.

**Figure 8.1: Views of St Mary's Church Tower**



8.20 There are two points of entry into the town at Chediston Road and Walpole Road where there is a sharp change from countryside to urban area creating a pleasing gateway. Other roads into town such as Wissett Road, Holton Road and Harrisons Lane have seen significant new residential developments, as far as the parish boundary, that have a suburban, built-up feel. The overall setting of the town, with an abundance of trees and shrubs, is important for preserving its identity. In this regard, its gateways are key to this. Any development that might occur in the future along the gateway routes into and out of Halesworth therefore needs to ensure that the transition from rural countryside to urban settlement is gradual, avoiding dense, bulky buildings with large, bare walls as the first built development one sees on entering the town. Development can achieve this through effective landscaping buffers along boundaries, including lining the gateway routes with trees, and through ensuring that development avoids creating an overly dense feel close to the gateways.

8.21 The two specific gateways identified are summarised below:



***Chediston Street where it meets Roman Way***



***Chediston Street looking into town***

8.22 On the western edge of Halesworth, along Chediston Street, the landform to the south and hedgerow to the north contribute to the sense of arrival at Halesworth. The junction is at the edge of recent residential development which defines the threshold from urban to rural.



***Walpole Road (looking into town and out of town)***

8.23 Walpole Road, going out of town, crosses rolling agricultural fields with wide open skies towards the southwest. Looking into town there is an abrupt phalanx of the backs of the houses in Dukes

Drive, this is only partly moderated by rather sparse hedgerow trees. In the Movement section of the Plan there is a proposal for a walk around the south and west of the town at the backs of the houses which would enhance the meeting of the rural and urban.

**POLICY HAL.DH2: VIEWS AND GATEWAYS INTO AND OUT OF HALESWORTH TOWN**

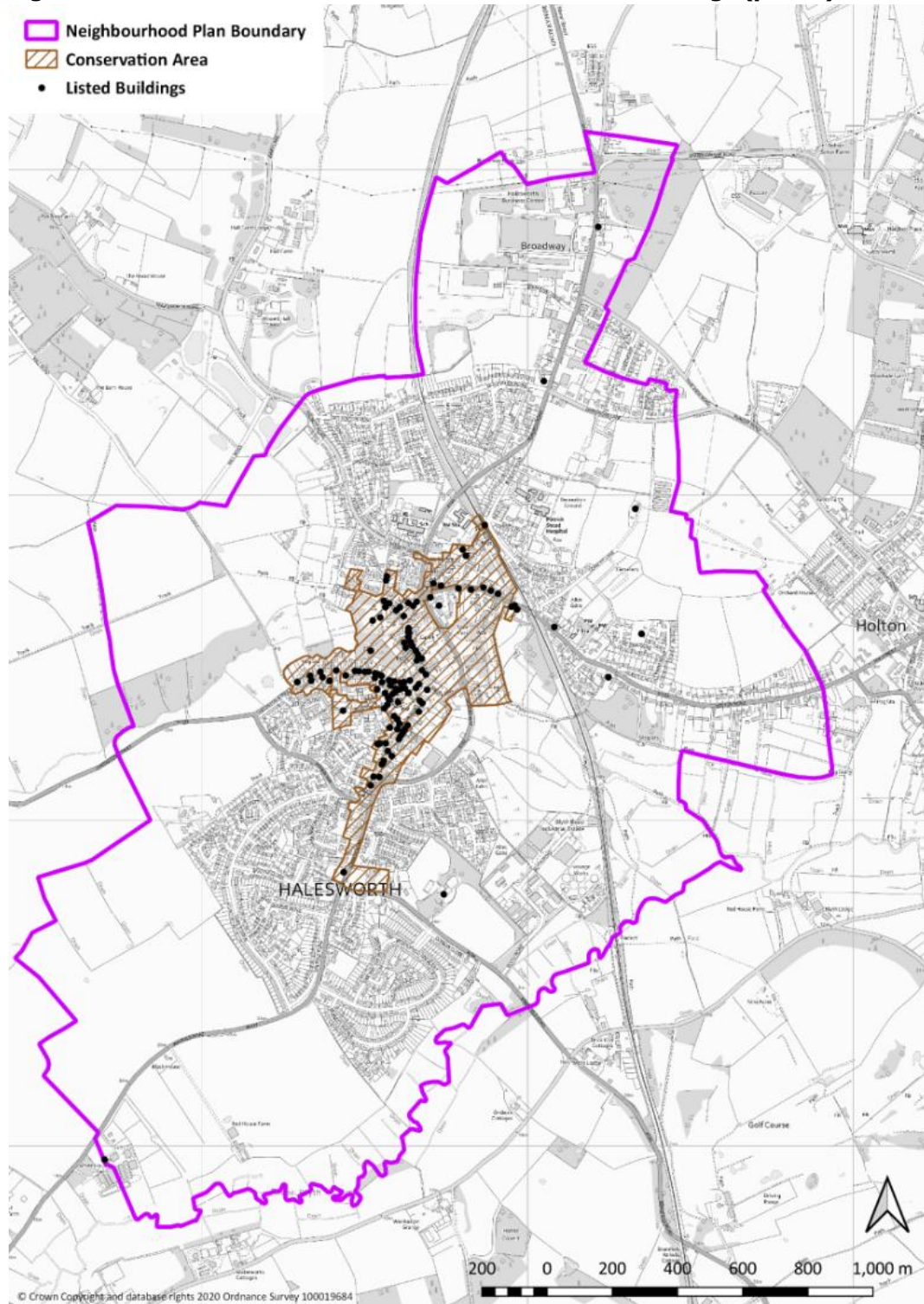
- A. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should preserve the views of St Mary's Church tower, Halesworth, as shown on the Policies Map and in Figure 8.1.**
- B. Development proposals adjacent to the gateways into Halesworth town in Chediston Street and Walpole Road should demonstrate how they contribute to creating a gradual transition from rural countryside to urban settlement (and vice versa). Development proposals should avoid creating an overly dense feel and appropriate planting or other natural boundary treatments should be used to mitigate the impact of development and retain the open feel. This should include the use of trees to line the gateway routes.**



## Heritage

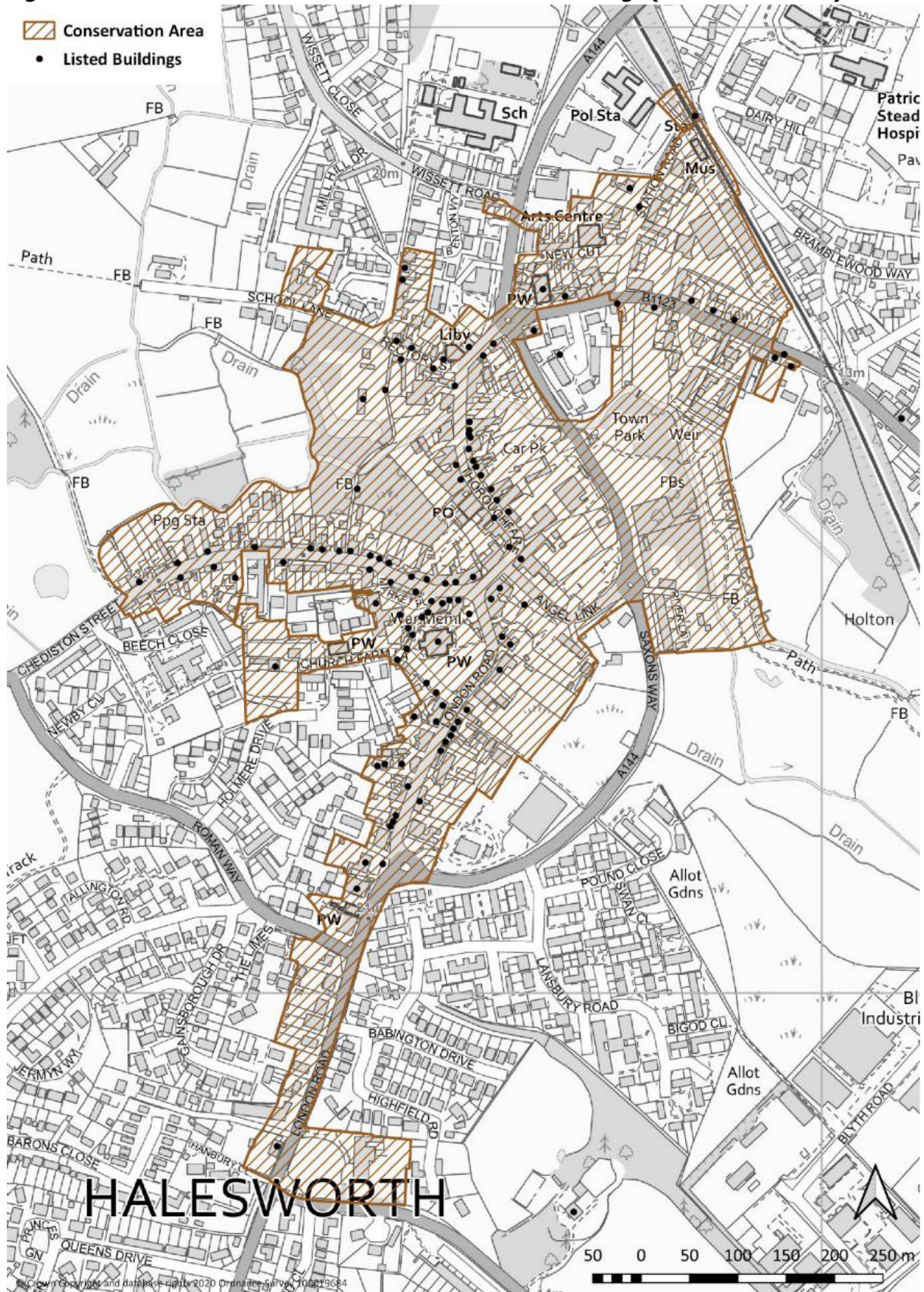
- 8.24 Being a historic market town, Halesworth has a significant heritage. There is an extensive conservation area in the town containing 129 individually listed buildings (see Figures 8.2a and 8.2b).

**Figure 8.2a: Halesworth conservation area and listed buildings (parish)**





**Figure 8.2b: Halesworth conservation area and listed buildings (Halesworth town)**



- 8.25 Local Plan Policy WLP8.37 (Historic Environment) provides an appropriate policy framework for listed buildings. Local Plan Policy WLP8.39 (Conservation Areas) requires development within the conservation area to be of a particularly high standard of design and materials in order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. This policy gives protection to a large section of the Town Centre which is of enormous importance economically as it attracts local people and tourists to spend time and money there. The Town Centre section of this Plan expands on this aspect of the heritage of the town. The Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>18</sup> also provides important guidance.

### **Non-designated heritage assets**

- 8.26 There are a number of buildings in the town which have historic or design importance but do not have nationally listed status. Local Plan Policy WLP8.38 (Non-designated heritage assets) supports the neighbourhood planning process in addressing this. It requires that proposals for the re-use of buildings which are on the 'Local List' of Non-Designated Heritage Assets will be supported if compatible with the elements of the fabric and setting of the building which contribute to its significance. Any non-designated heritage assets identified in neighbourhood plans are then considered to have the same status as those on the 'Local List'.
- 8.27 The Waveney Local Plan has a series of criteria for justifying a non-designated heritage asset. This has resulted in the following buildings and structures being identified (with their location shown in Figure 8.3):

#### **1. The Maltings at Station Yard**



A building of historic interest due to its prominent role in the maltings industry and its association with the 19th century industrial development of the town. It is also located at a key entrance to the town for those arriving by train.

***Criteria – locally significant  
historic use, landmark status***



<sup>18</sup> Waveney District Council (2006) *Halesworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal*



## 2. Halesworth Library



This building has landmark status due to it being a model for contemporary design in an historic urban environment and its prominent position in the town at the end of the shopping street. It is also notable for its community associations.

**Criteria –**  
***architectural***  
***interest with a***  
***known architect,***

***strong social and community value, landmark status at the top of the pedestrianised shopping street and aesthetic value in the way it exhibits a positive external appearance in the street scene***

## 3. 18 Thoroughfare/Cross Ram offices



An Italianate-style building of historic interest, remodelled in 1840. It has both external and internal integrity and a prominent position in the Thoroughfare. It is surrounded by listed buildings.

**Criteria –**  
***Architectural***  
***integrity and***  
***landmark status in***  
***the Thoroughfare***

#### 4. Patrick Stead Hospital



This has historic interest being the first hospital in the town, built by a major Maltings owner. At the time of writing the hospital has been closed for some years. It has been designated as a Community Asset up until May 2023. Notification was given in June 2021 that the NHS were to dispose of the building. The Site Options and Appraisal report commissioned by the NPSG noted that the building could be used for various community activities.

***Criteria – historic interest as the first 19th Century hospital, source of***

***local identity and landmark status within the Halesworth and Holton Healthy Neighbourhood***

#### 5. New Reach



Dug in 1759-1760 as part of the Blyth Navigation (which was subject of an Act of Parliament in 1757), the New Reach provided a direct link between Halesworth and the sea at Southwold Harbour. Over the next 100 years, wherries provided the vital transport link for the industries of Halesworth, importing raw materials and exporting finished goods. This was a major factor for Patrick Stead, one of the town's most important historical figures, basing his maltings business in the town. There is a close connection between this proposal and that concerning the Patrick Stead Hospital in that without the New Reach, it is arguable that the hospital may not have been built. Other maltings businesses also flourished and in this context, the New Reach's heritage also relates to that of the Station Yard Maltings. The Blyth Navigation ceased to be a commercial waterway by the end of the 19th century due to the advent of the railway and ongoing issues with silting in Southwold Harbour.

***Criteria – architectural interest due to its landmark status and historic interest given its rarity, its representativeness and its social and communal value.***



## 6. The Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway (Millennium Green)

The Halesworth to Southwold narrow gauge railway ran between the two towns from 1879 until its closure in 1929 and was just over 14 kilometres long. On 24th July 1876, The Southwold Railway Company obtained an Act of Parliament which enabled the line's construction. This also provided for two branch lines, one of which connected to the Blyth navigation, thus providing a historical link to the New Reach. The other connected to Blackshore Quay, between Southwold and Walberswick. Much of the track bed still remains unencumbered along the route, as well as substantial evidence of related civil engineering. In terms of the latter, three are located in Halesworth's Millennium Green. These are:

The 1879 bridge



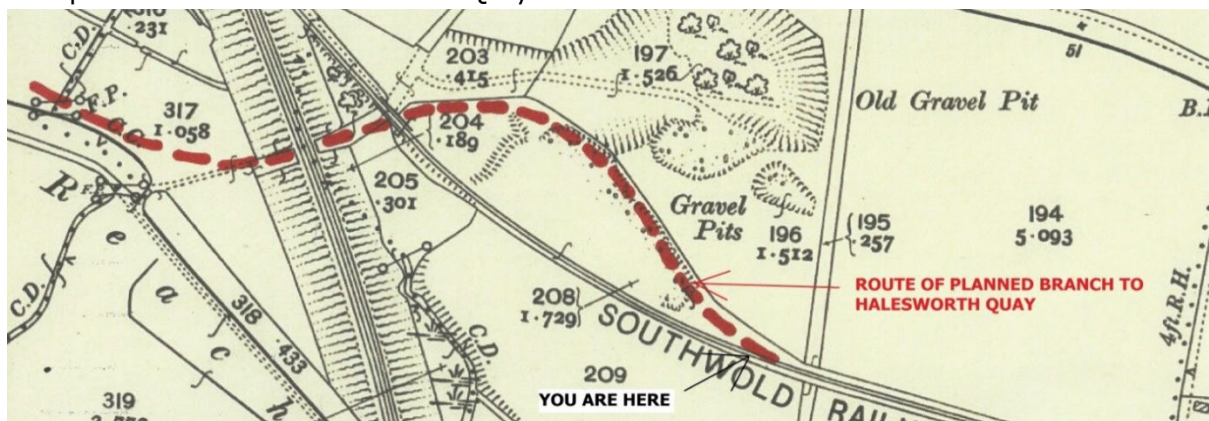
Relaid track over the bridge



Engine sheds at Birds Folly, dating from 1914



The planned route for the Halesworth Quay branch line



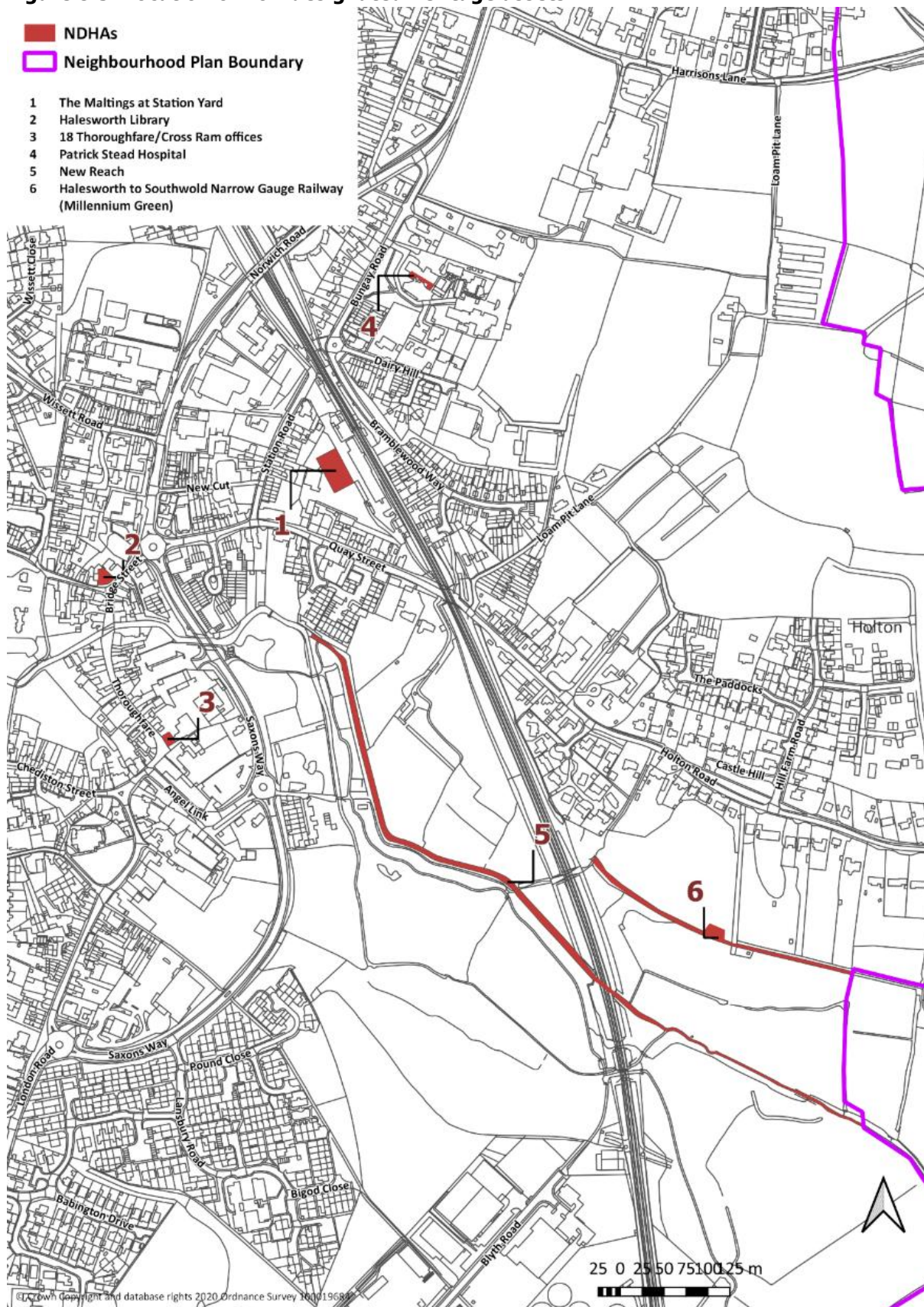
*Criteria – architectural interest due to the landmark status of its bridges and engine sheds, historic interest given its rarity, its representativeness, the association the railway has with local history and its social and communal value.*

**POLICY HAL.DH3: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS**

- A. The following, as shown on Figure 8.3 and the Policies Map, are identified as non-designated heritage assets:**
- 1. The Maltings at Station Yard**
  - 2. Halesworth Library**
  - 3. 18 Thoroughfare/Cross Ram offices**
  - 4. Patrick Stead Hospital**
  - 5. New Reach**
  - 6. Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway (Millennium Green)**
- B. Proposals for the re-use of Non-Designated Heritage Assets will be supported if they meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy WLP8.38 (Non-Designated Heritage Assets).**
- C. In considering proposals which involve the loss or alteration of a non-designated heritage asset, consideration will be given to:**
- a. Whether the asset is structurally unsound and beyond feasible and viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect); or**
  - b. The extent to which measures to sustain the existing use, or find an alternative use/user, have been investigated.**
- Where a development proposal would result in the loss of, or harm to a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be made as to the acceptability of the proposal having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.**



**Figure 8.3: Location of non-designated heritage assets**



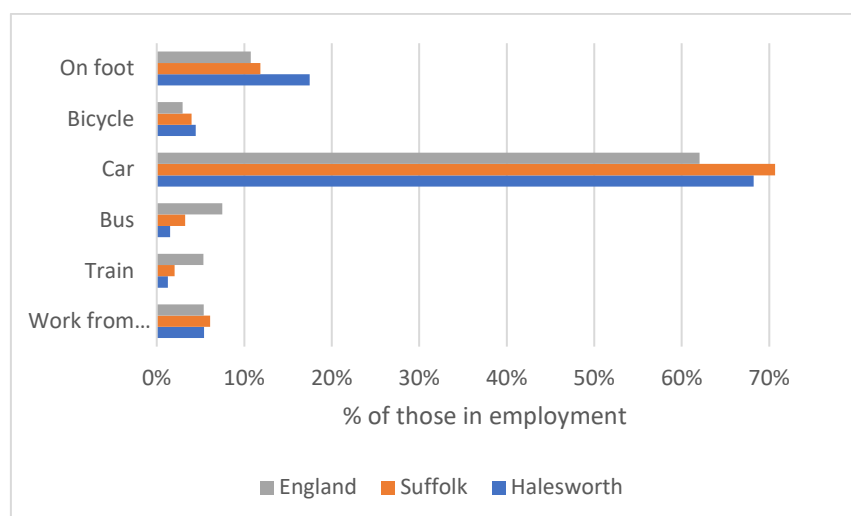
## 9 MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT

- 9.1 The volume of cars in and around Halesworth is an issue that the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address. This recognises that the primary opportunity is to improve the potential for walking and cycling for local journeys, particularly those into the town centre and to other key destinations. The following objective was consulted upon and received community approval.

***Promote a transport infrastructure which connects different parts of the town and enables people to move about easily, safely and enjoyably whether on foot, bicycle, mobility vehicle or public transport.***

- 9.2 Halesworth, originally a medieval market town, has a town centre of narrow streets not designed for cars. Later developments spread out from the centre primarily along a north-south axis either side of the A144. Much of the town's infrastructure is accessed from this main road – the industrial/employment sites, doctor's surgery, Edgar Sewter Primary School and the Thoroughfare, the main shopping street.
- 9.3 The building of the town centre bypass - Saxons Way - in 1989 brought relief to the Thoroughfare and enabled it to be partially pedestrianised. However, Saxons Way and Angel Link act as barriers for pedestrians and cyclists and cuts the town centre off from the open spaces of the Millennium Green. There is only one pedestrian crossing along the whole route and substantial roundabouts make crossing Saxons Way difficult.

**Figure 9.1: Method of travel to work**



Source: 2011 Census

- 9.4 Reliance on the car is high for getting to work and for accessing the town centre from outlying areas and nearby villages. Figure 9.1 shows that in 2011 nearly 70% of journeys to work were by car, although there were still a good number of people working locally - nearly 20% of people that travelled to work did so on foot, which was well above the average for Suffolk and for England. Indeed, approximately one-third of journeys to work were less than 2km in 2011. Changing working patterns – due to increased home working - are likely to increase the number of people making short journeys as part of their working day.
- 9.5 Cycling features in the town as it is on the route of National Cycle Route 1, which brings cycle groups into the cafes in town. Its route is highlighted on Figure 9.3. The NPSG has worked with Sustrans to look at how this can be improved, without losing the benefits, as part of the route

through the town centre and through a car park are assessed as dangerous and inadequate by Sustrans and inhibits the further pedestrianisation of the Thoroughfare which residents say they want to see.

## **Public and community transport**

- 9.6 The railway station with its connections to Lowestoft, Ipswich and onwards to London is important for the town. The proposed through train to London will support the flexible home working economy.
- 9.7 Bus travel to and from Halesworth is limited in both routes and times and became more so when the through bus to Norwich was stopped in 2019. Having to make an unreliable change at Bungay made the bus journey unsuitable for most purposes. A reinstatement of a twice-daily through service in 2021 aimed to make it possible to travel to Norwich for some educational and work-related journeys. The Bus Services Act 2017 gave local transport authorities some powers to take a more strategic view of bus services. In June 2021, Suffolk County Council (SCC) agreed to pursue a plan to overhaul bus services. 'Bus Back Better' involves joint provision by SCC and bus providers with the intention of improving services and extends to the supported community transport sector. This initiative is in the early stages, so it is an opportune time for the Town Council to engage.
- 9.8 Without major national and local investment and a more strategically managed service it is unlikely that commercial bus services will significantly improve to make it a viable option for more people.
- 9.9 Plans for a bus hub at the Angel Link car park were suggested some years ago but were dropped. This re-siting of bus stops and bus termini near to the town centre would have created smoother traffic flow on Saxons Way as traffic would no longer have to stop behind buses as they wait at stops. New plans for the long-term car park site may bring opportunities to resurrect the idea and the NPSG would encourage this to be looked at again.
- 9.10 Halesworth Community Transport (HACT) is a familiar feature in town as it runs a 'Hoppa' bus – a scheduled ticketed route that supports elderly people in accessing the shops, market and doctor's surgery. And the hiring of the HACT community bus has enabled parents to get their children to schools of their choice. Voluntary car services, run by Halesworth Volunteer Centre, act as a lifeline for many who cannot drive.
- 9.11 Encouraging bus travel into the town from outlying estates and from nearby villages, as an alternative to car travel would have many benefits but would need considerable thought and investment. At present the Hoppa bus offers an alternative for areas within Halesworth, and the Connecting Communities scheme can be used for those in neighbouring villages. East Suffolk Council under its Community Partnership initiative is looking at supporting numerous community transport schemes. It could be timely for Halesworth to take a strategic look at its wider transport needs.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

**Halesworth Town Council will work with Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council and other local partners to explore the potential for further community bus services to serve Halesworth and the surrounding villages.**



## Car travel and parking

- 9.12 Car travel is likely to remain the dominant form of transport for some years to come. Well managed parking that encourages people to use the shops and facilities of the town will need to be retained. The view of many residents and business owners is that both more and free car parking is needed. The hard evidence available gives some mixed messages. The free hour parking in one of the car parks was removed in 2016. A subsequent study showed that car park usage, as measured by income to the council, dropped. A study of car park usage undertaken by East Suffolk Council in 2019, as part of the People & Places initiative, showed use never reached full capacity other than in the Town Centre car park where the free hour was available. Footfall in the town centre also indicated that people did not stay beyond the hour, unlike in other towns with different parking arrangements. Since then, all five car parks have had the same pay structure of a free half hour, with a digital payment system giving the ability to top up payments without having to return to your car. There have been many teething problems with the system which need to be rectified by the District Council. A proposed system to show where spaces are available, coupled with better signage to the car parks, would help even out usage.
- 9.13 A number of development opportunities in Halesworth could be seen as putting pressure on parking or requiring some changes to layouts. An updated survey of usage is needed once the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic is at an end so that impacts on parking can be realistically examined and understood. The Town Council and NPSG are members of the People and Places initiative that is looking at improving and marketing the town centre. A further review of the usage of the public car parks has been included in the action plan and will be conducted once it is considered movement of people is back to pre-pandemic levels.
- 9.14 The growing usage of electric cars will be the biggest change in car travel in the next decade. Charging facilities will be needed for visitors and for emergencies. As yet Suffolk County Council has not announced if or how it intends to strategically install charging points. Any changes to car park design that development might bring about needs to factor in charging points. Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.21 (Sustainable Transport) encourages the provision of charging facilities for electric vehicles and requires all types of development to meet the standards in the Suffolk County Council Parking Guidance, to provide and maintain points. The Housing chapter of the Plan includes a section on electric charging in new homes.

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: PUBLIC CAR PARKING**

**Halesworth Town Council will consider the findings of the car parking survey and develop an action plan as appropriate.**

## Improving cycling and pedestrian routes

- 9.15 In terms of trying to positively influence future patterns of movement into and around Halesworth, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus on making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to encourage more walking and cycling from all the residential areas. Linking the new housing sites, as well as the existing parts of the town, into the network of walkways and safer cycling routes is vital to encourage more walking and cycling and less use of the car. The NPSG is greatly encouraged that East Suffolk Council (ESC) is preparing a Cycling and Walking Strategy

(C&WS), building on the existing Waveney Cycle Strategy (adopted in 2016). The proposals for new and improved cycling and walking opportunities in this section were shared with ESC during the initial engagement period (October-December 2020)<sup>19</sup>. At the time of writing ESC is assessing all of these cycling and walking opportunities (approximately 800) and is preparing a draft C&WS for consultation in autumn 2021.

- 9.16 The amount of proposed development in Halesworth provides an opportunity for cycling and walking to be considered as part of the planning process and ESC has invested Community Infrastructure Levy funding into new routes in the northeast of the town.
- 9.17 However, new national guidance on the creation of effective and safe cycle routes represents a significant challenge for medieval market towns such as Halesworth with their narrow roads.
- 9.18 Cycling and walking are also important aspects of the tourism offer and therefore for the economic development that the town can offer.
- 9.19 Figure 9.2 below illustrates the set of routes that presently exist for cycling and walking.
- 9.20 Two 'expert' groups were brought together by the NPSG. One made up of cyclists, included both recreational cyclists and those who use it as a main means of transport, and a walkers group made up of representatives from a number of local walking groups. Using the existing footpath maps, Public Rights of Way, the Halesworth Town Plan and the Waveney Cycling Strategy<sup>20</sup> as guides, the following principles were used to make detailed proposals for how routes can be improved to bring a range of benefits to residents and visitors:
- Provide genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing the town centre, local schools and other community facilities;
  - Provide health benefits through increased walking and cycling;
  - Facilitate less congestion at busy times by encouraging children to walk to and from school and people to walk to the shops rather than 'jumping in the car' for a short journey;
  - Respond to the challenges of climate change;
  - Provide a safer environment for the community of Halesworth, including for vulnerable users.
- 9.21 This is supported by Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.21 which requires development to be close to and provide safe pedestrian and cycle access. It encourages the enhancement of existing pedestrian routes and the public rights of way network and also to deliver the identified schemes in the Waveney Cycling Strategy.

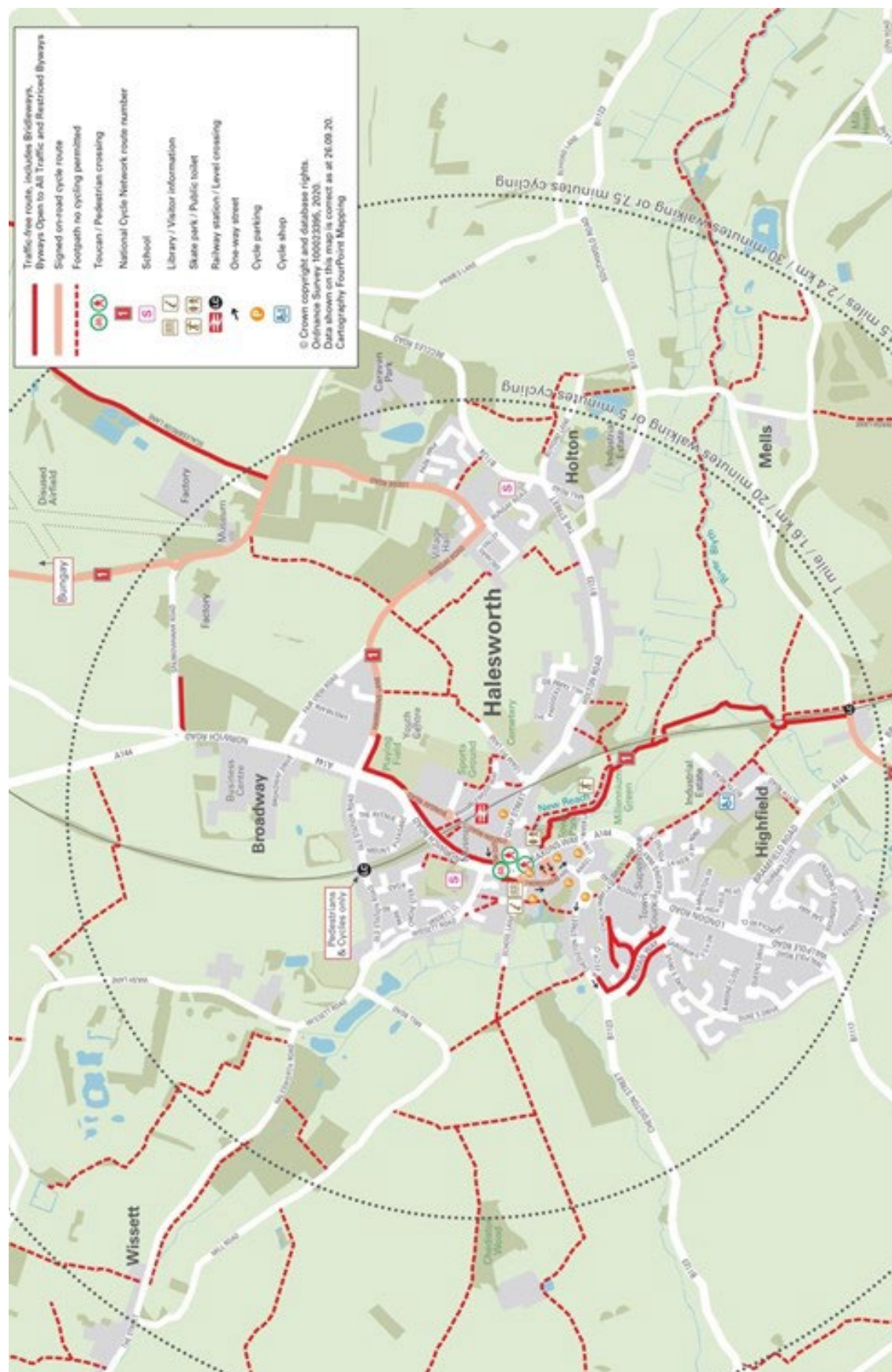
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<sup>19</sup> These can be viewed on this map of East Suffolk:

<https://eastsuffolk.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=810e5f8977e144509f13120a00a341d6>

<sup>20</sup> Waveney District Council (2016) *Waveney Cycling Strategy*

**Figure 9.2: Current walking and cycling routes**





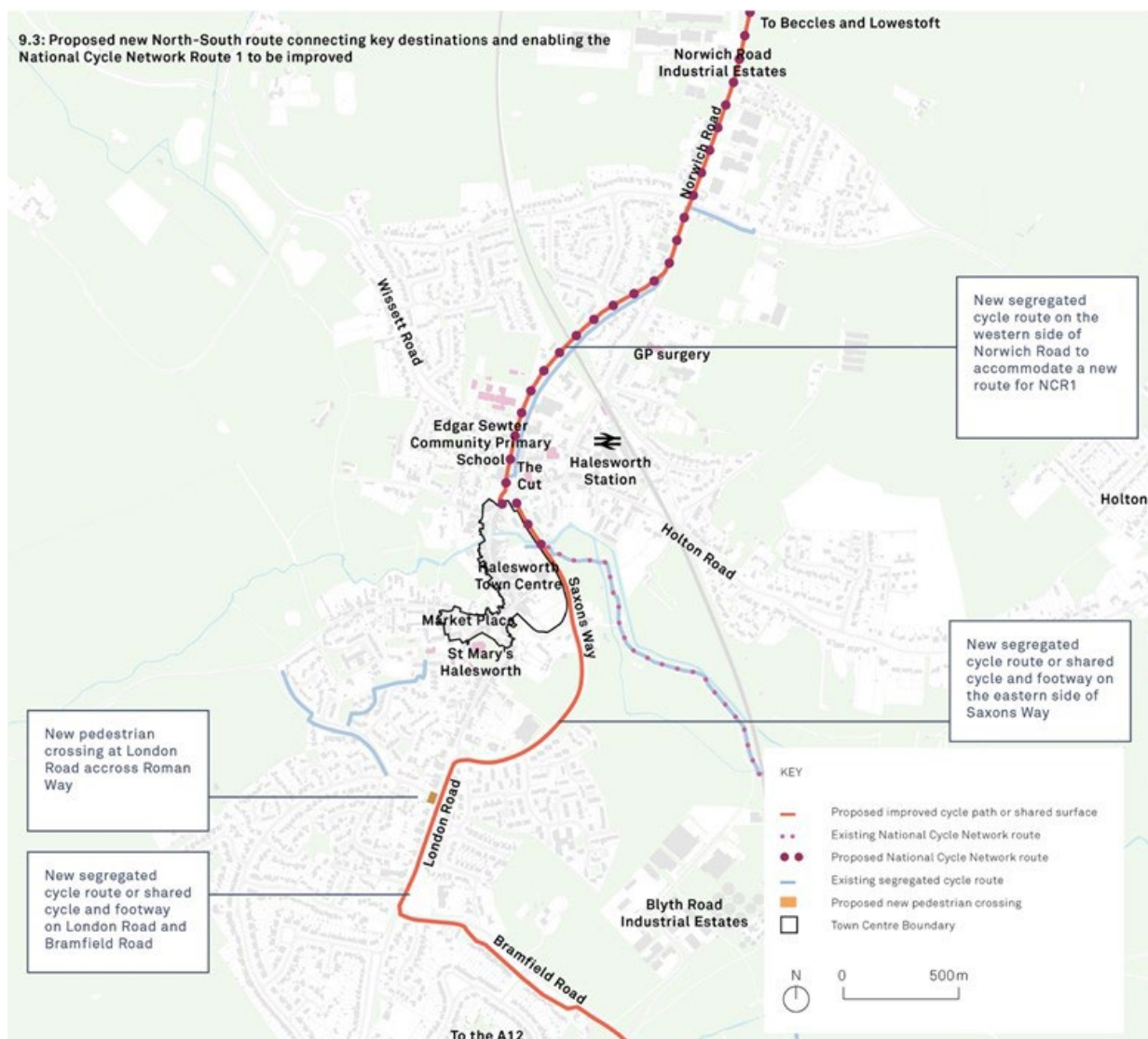
9.22 The following policies and actions address the principles of improving walking and cycling in Halesworth:

***a. Linking residential areas (including proposed new developments) to the main town destinations***

9.23 There are a number of residential development sites which are either under construction or in the planning pipeline. Local Plan Policy WLP8.21 is bringing improvements, with ESC and SCC working on connectivity for the developments in the north and east of the town including enabling children to walk or cycle to school and new routes to the doctor's surgery.

9.24 The Neighbourhood Plan has identified other improvements that support connectivity for some of the existing residential areas in the town, including a new major cycle route from the northern edge of the town through to the south and east along the A144. This will enable the National Cycle Route 1 (NCR1), located on the northern and central parts of the new route, to be upgraded as it is deemed unsatisfactory at present. Figures 9.3 and 9.4 show the proposed new route and how it links to the housing in the south and to new developments along the route. A more detailed description and rationale for the proposed route is shown in Appendix 1.

**Figure 9.3: Proposed new North-South route connecting key destinations and enabling the National Cycle Network Route 1 to be improved**

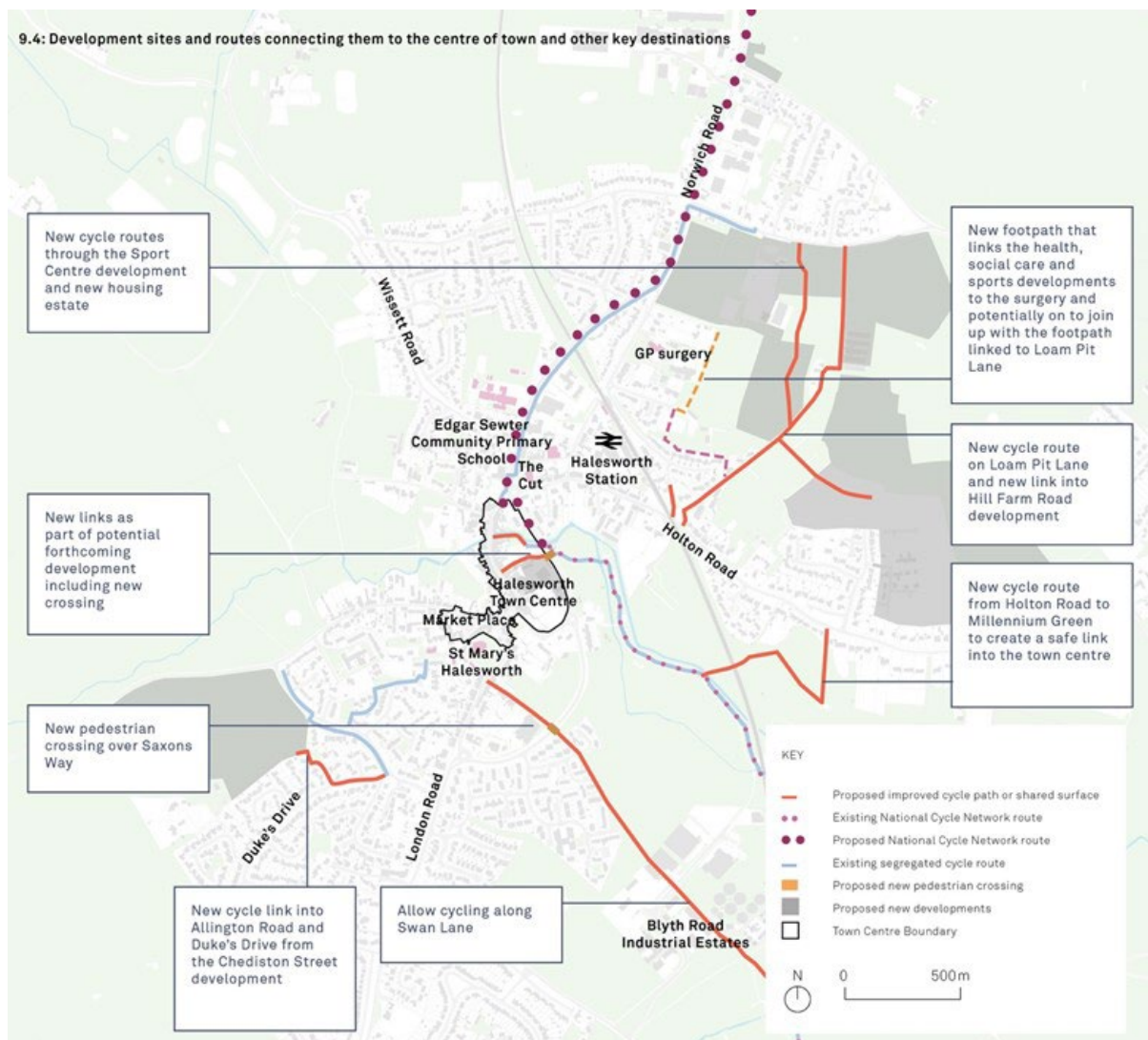


**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: CREATE A KEY MOVEMENT ROUTE NORTH TO SOUTH AND ENABLE THE UPGRADING OF NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK ROUTE 1**

**Halesworth Town Council will work with Suffolk County Council, Sustrans and other partners to create a direct and safe cycle route from the northern edge of the town through to the south and east along the A144 (as shown in Figure 9.3). This will enable cycling along the relevant key movement route and will upgrade the National Cycle Route 1 (NCR1).**

9.25 Figure 9.4 shows the development sites, the ESC proposed walking and cycling routes and the Neighbourhood Plan proposals.

**Figure 9.4: Development sites and routes connecting them to the centre of town and other key destinations**



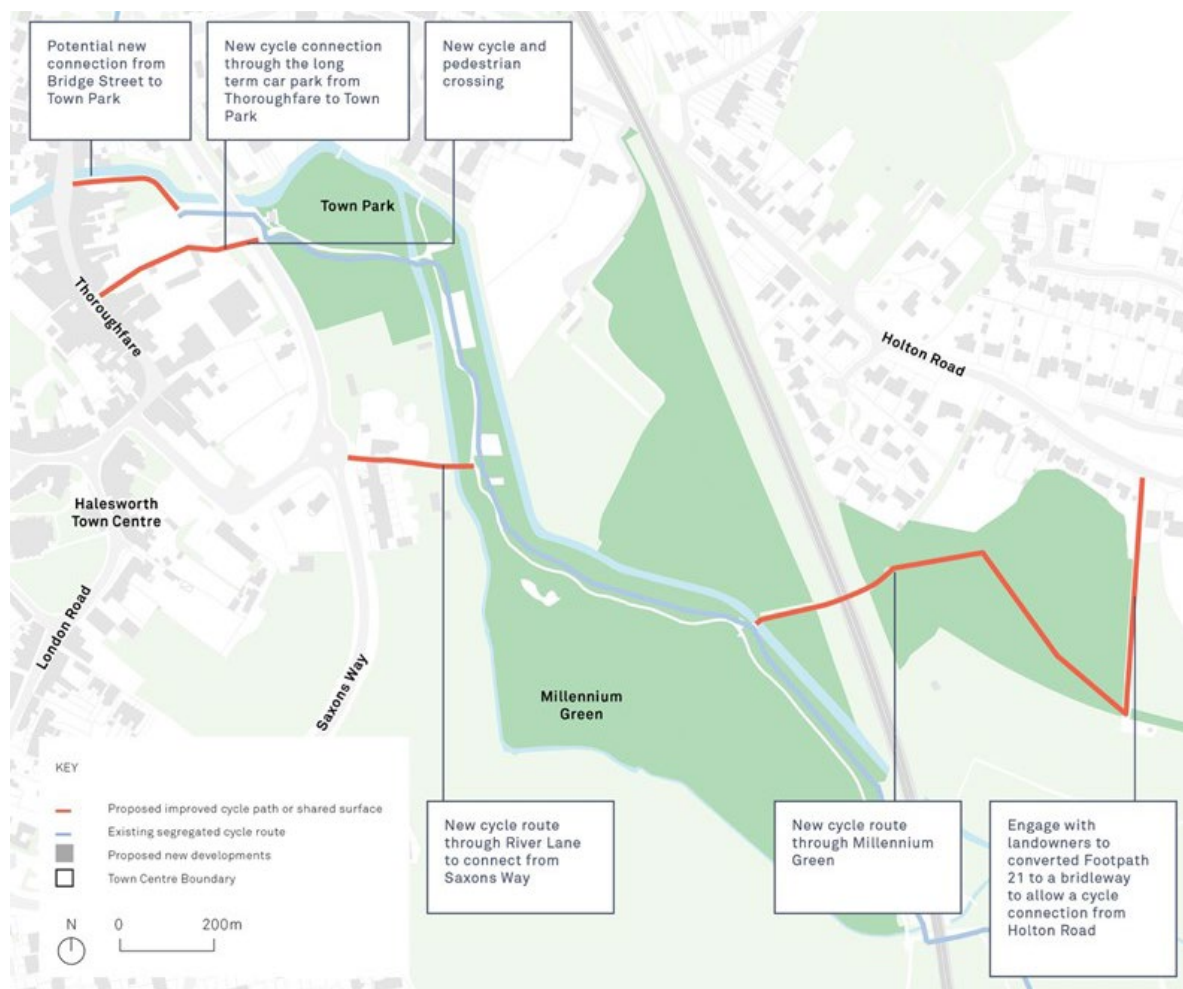
9.26 Specifically in the town centre, improving the experience of pedestrians in the Thoroughfare and the wider Town Centre was a key part of the Town Centre Connectivity project commissioned by the Town Council. This was seen as a way of supporting businesses and the health and safety of

residents and drew on the earlier survey work of the Town Council's Urban Improvement Working Group. The results of the work of the architects, which was informed by consultation with residents, can be found in the Town Centre section of the Plan. It includes some of the improvements to movement of pedestrians and cyclists found in this section of the plan.

***b. Improve cycling connectivity into the Town Park and the Millennium Green (including to NCR1) and out into the countryside beyond***

- 9.27 The Park and the Millennium Green are key destinations especially for families with children, walkers with and without dogs and cyclists. Present access is limited for cyclists and pose some hazards for pedestrians. The Millennium Green trustees are keen to make best use of their land to support walking and cycling and have devised a new cycle route through part of the Green which would add much to the connectivity of the town. This is shown in Figure 9.5.
- 9.28 The NPSG has worked with landowners and residents to try and enable improvements, and these potential changes, with their required legal changes, will need taking forward in the future. Some entail upgrading footpaths into bridleways, others using bridges not quite wide enough for full shared usage so needing pedestrian priority signalling, while others rely on landowner permissions. If the landowner of Footpath 21 agrees to allowing cycling, the Millennium Green trustees will take the proposal forward.
- 9.29 Figure 9.5 shows the present access routes, how these could be improved for cyclists, and potential new access routes with the necessary legal changes needed.

**Figure 9.5: Access to the Town Park and Millennium Green**



**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: IMPROVING CYCLE CONNECTIVITY INTO THE TOWN PARK AND THE MILLENNIUM GREEN**

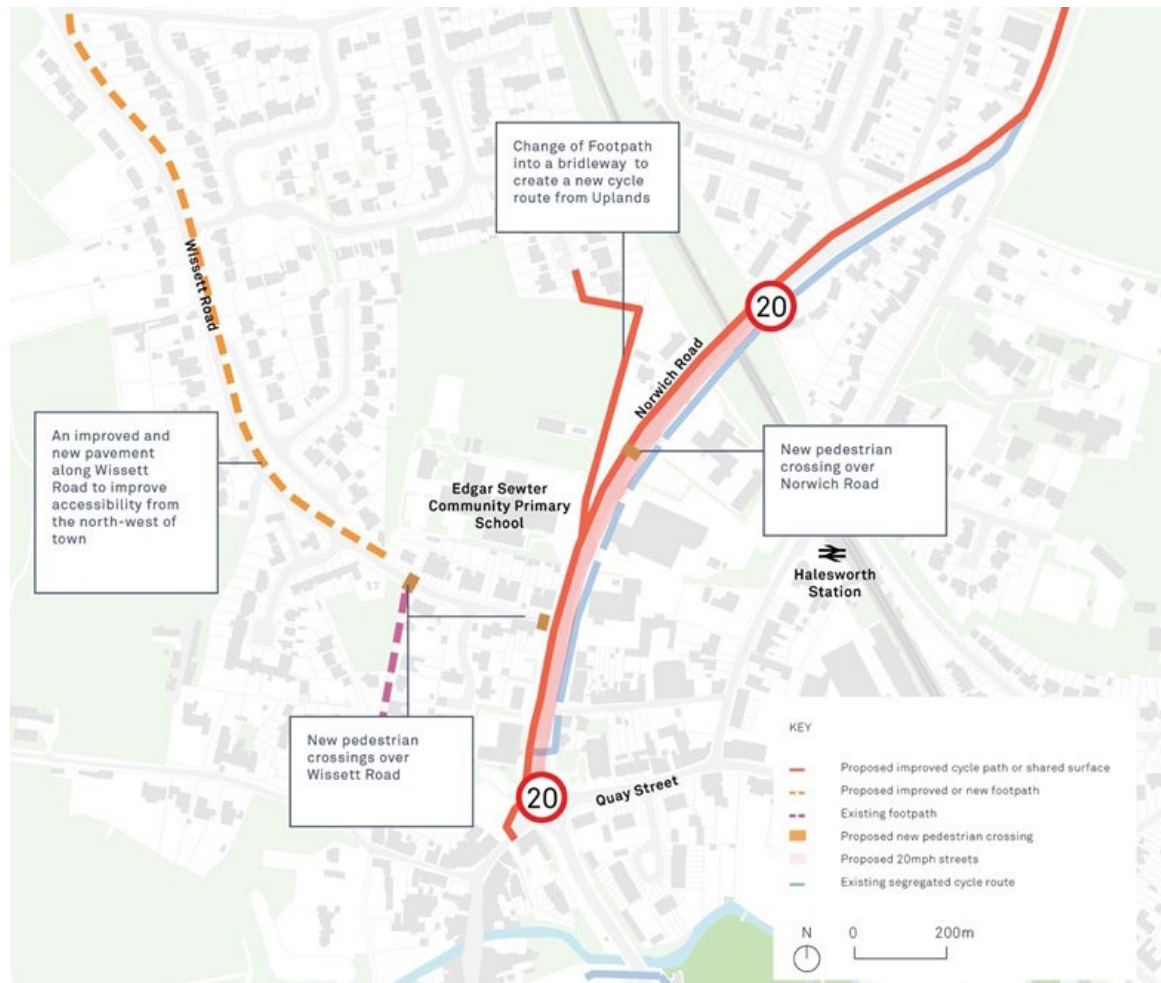
**Halesworth Town Council will work with Suffolk County Council, Sustrans and other partners to create safe cycle routes that improve cycle connectivity to the Town Park and Millennium Green (as shown in Figure 9.5).**

***c. Make walking, cycling and scootering to Edgar Sewter Primary School a safe and healthy option for children and parents***

- 9.30 When the NPSG consulted the children at Edgar Sewter Primary School, one of their main concerns was feeling unsafe on their journey to and from school. With the expansion of the school there has been an opportunity to work with SCC and the Asset Academy to look at improvements around the school itself. Figure 9.6 suggests the required improvements that reflect the 'pinch points' identified by the children. Some of these, such as the patrolled crossing at Wissett Road/Norwich Road and the crossing across the Norwich Road, need resources and could be included in CIL bids. Others such as the proposed cycle routes from Uplands need a redesign involving some land from the school playground and the change of Footpath 2 into a bridleway. The 20mph limit outside the school on Norwich Road entails a change of policy by SCC which at present does not support 20mph on A-roads. There have been positive responses to both these suggestions.
- 9.31 Another matter of concern to parents and children is the danger posed by the parking outside the school and the lack of parking for parents needing to drop off and pick up their children by car. SCC will be devising a Travel Plan as a part of the expansion of the school and are in discussion with ESC to enable parents to use the two nearest car parks more easily. Another improvement would be to change the parking regulations for the parking bay outside the school gates to 30-minute parking with no return for 4 hours as a way of stopping all day parking by people working locally and enabling drop off and pick up by parents.



**Figure 9.6: Improvements required for safer school access**



- 9.32 East Suffolk Council are intending to improve routes for children from the new developments in the north and east of the town. This is shown in Figure 9.4.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: IMPROVEMENTS TO ACCESSIBILITY OF EDGAR SEWTER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Halesworth Town Council will work with Suffolk County Council and other appropriate bodies to address the following matters that will help to improve the safety of children walking and cycling to Edgar Sewter Primary School:

- i. Patrolled pedestrian crossing at Wissett Road/Norwich Road and further down Wissett Road at the back entrance to the school and Children Centre
- ii. Safer pedestrian crossing across the Norwich Road
- iii. 20mph speed limit outside school on Norwich Road
- iv. Creation of cycle route from Uplands
- v. Change of Footpath 2 into a bridleway
- vi. Change of parking regulations for the parking bay on Norwich Road to enable use for drop-off and pick-up of children

### ***3. Improve safety for elderly and disabled people moving around the town***

- 9.33 Consultation with elderly and disabled people and with organisations working with them indicated that overall Halesworth catered quite well for movement within the centre of the town although better maintenance of the Thoroughfare was mentioned. Other improvements for pedestrians in the Thoroughfare would be welcomed (see Town Centre section of the Plan).
- 9.34 Lack of dropped kerbs needs investigation and the NPSG would suggest an audit is carried out to see where they are needed.
- 9.35 Policies relating to pedestrian access will greatly improve accessibility in the future. In some parts of town however, pavements do not exist at all with little room to provide any. A new pavement along Wissett Road would improve accessibility from the north-west of town (shown in Figure 9.6).
- 9.36 Three major junctions were identified as needing the installation of a safe crossing:
- Across Roman Way where it joins London Road which is the main route out of town to the A143 and on towards the A14. (Shown in Figure 9.3)
  - Across Saxons Way from the Lansbury Road estate, which includes houses designed for elderly people, at the Swan Lane crossing enabling safer journeys to the Co-op and into town (see Town Centre section of the Neighbourhood Plan which recommends such a crossing) (shown in Figure 9.4).
  - Across Wissett Road where it joins Norwich Road. In discussions with SCC regarding school children, this crossing is seen as too difficult to install a permanent safe crossing system. A school patrol could provide for children but would not resolve the issue for elderly people. (This is referenced in Figure 9.6 - highway planners at SCC do not think a permanent pedestrian crossing is possible because of the narrowness of the road.)

#### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: IMPROVEMENTS TO SAFETY OF ELDERLY AND DISABLED PEOPLE**

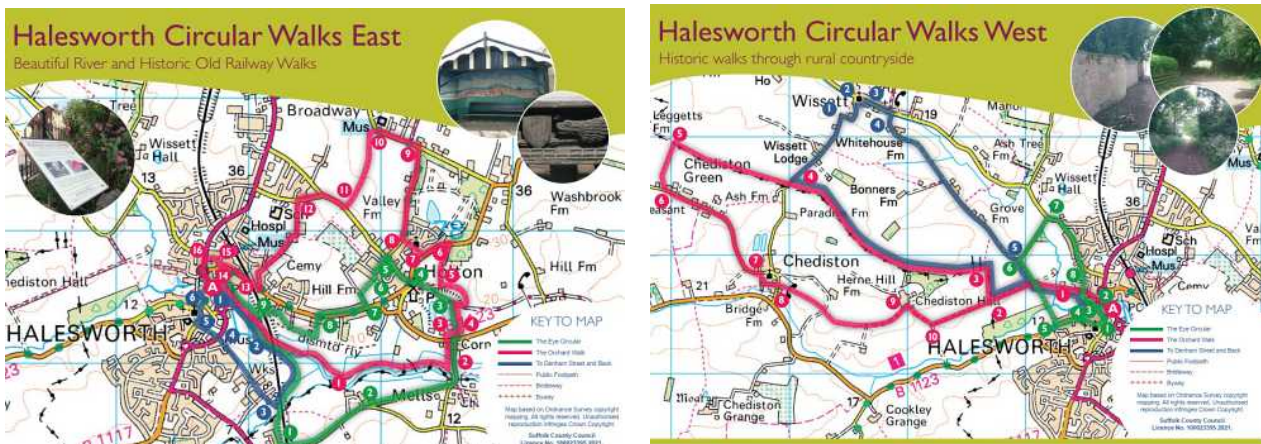
**Halesworth Town Council will work with Suffolk County Council and other appropriate bodies to address the following matters that will help to improve the safety of elderly and disabled people in Halesworth:**

- i. an audit of dropped kerbs**
- ii. a new pavement along Wissett Road down to Old Station Road**
- iii. safer crossings across Roman Way where it joins London Road, across Saxons Way from the Lansbury Road estate and across Wissett Road where it joins Norwich Road.**

### ***4. Improve walking routes from and around town and out into nearby countryside***

- 9.37 Walking is an important part of 'softer' tourism whether for walking in and around the town and viewing its historic gems or walking out into the Suffolk countryside.
- 9.38 The walking group set up a subgroup to look at these in more detail and some initiatives have been achieved or are in the process:
- Two new leaflets (digital and print) containing three newly devised walks each will be published. They all start in town and spread-out eastwards or westwards using existing footpaths and public rights of way. Historical information has been written by the Museum and the 'Welcome

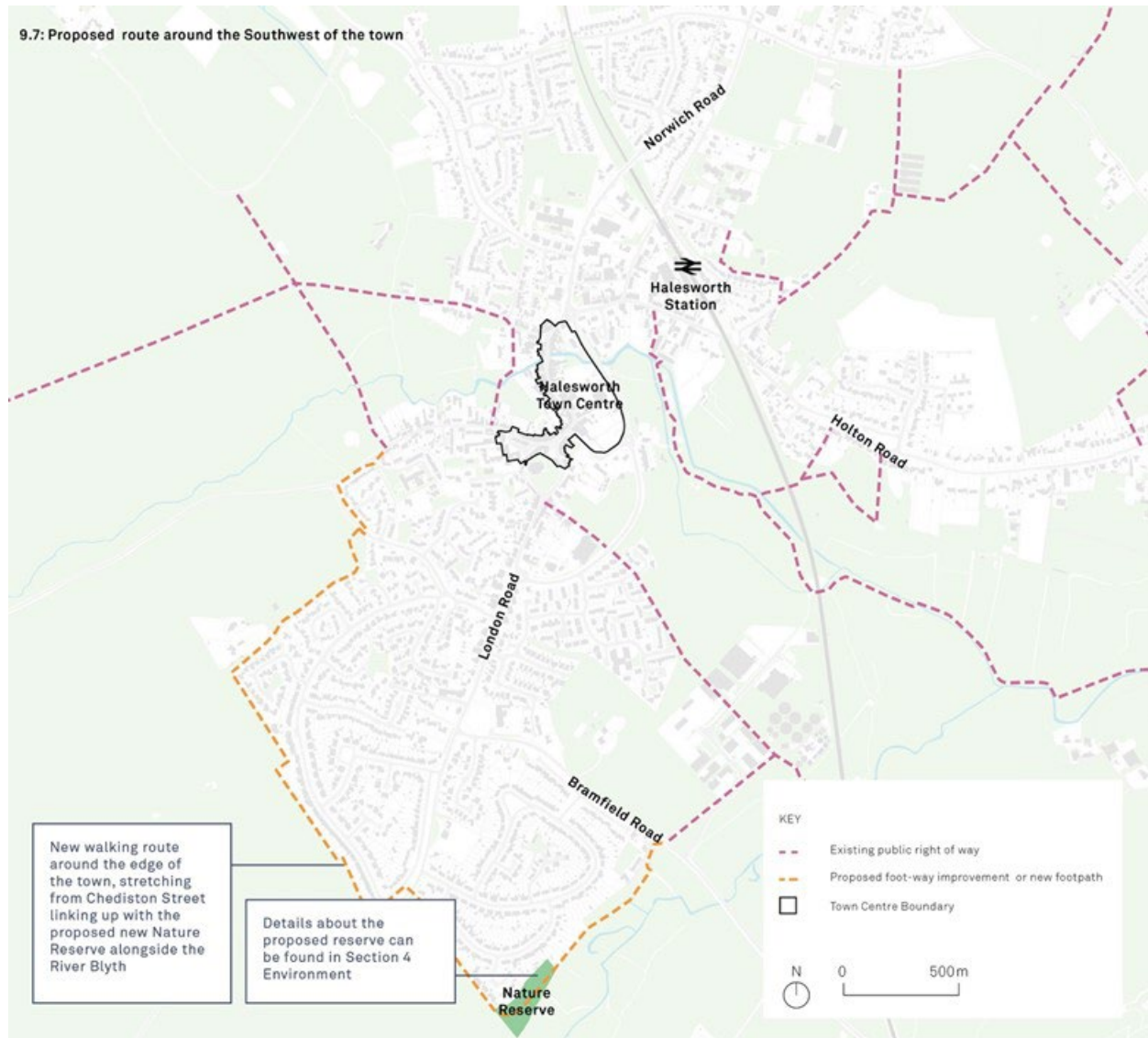
to Halesworth' information by the Tourism Group. Published by SCC, a local councillor and the Town Council have contributed to their costs. Print copies will be distributed to tourist destinations and accommodation.



### *Leaflets promoting historic circular walks in Halesworth*

- Numerous existing leaflets of trails around town such as the Hooker Trail, Malt Trail and Town Trail are being digitalised so they can all appear on tourism websites.
- As shown on Figure 9.2 the south of the town is lacking in footpaths. The NPSG wishes to see a walk around the edge of the town stretching from Chediston Street (the planned housing estate could enable the start of such a path) round the back of the houses of Dukes Drive, crossing Walpole Road, continuing behind the houses of Kennedy Avenue and Close, linking up with the proposed new Nature Reserve alongside the River Blyth. At either end this path would link to public rights of way which take walkers back into town or through the Millennium Green. Whilst landowner agreement has not been secured, it is hoped that new Environmental Land Management schemes and new subsidy arrangements for farmers may provide incentives for this to happen in the future. This is shown in Figure 9.7.

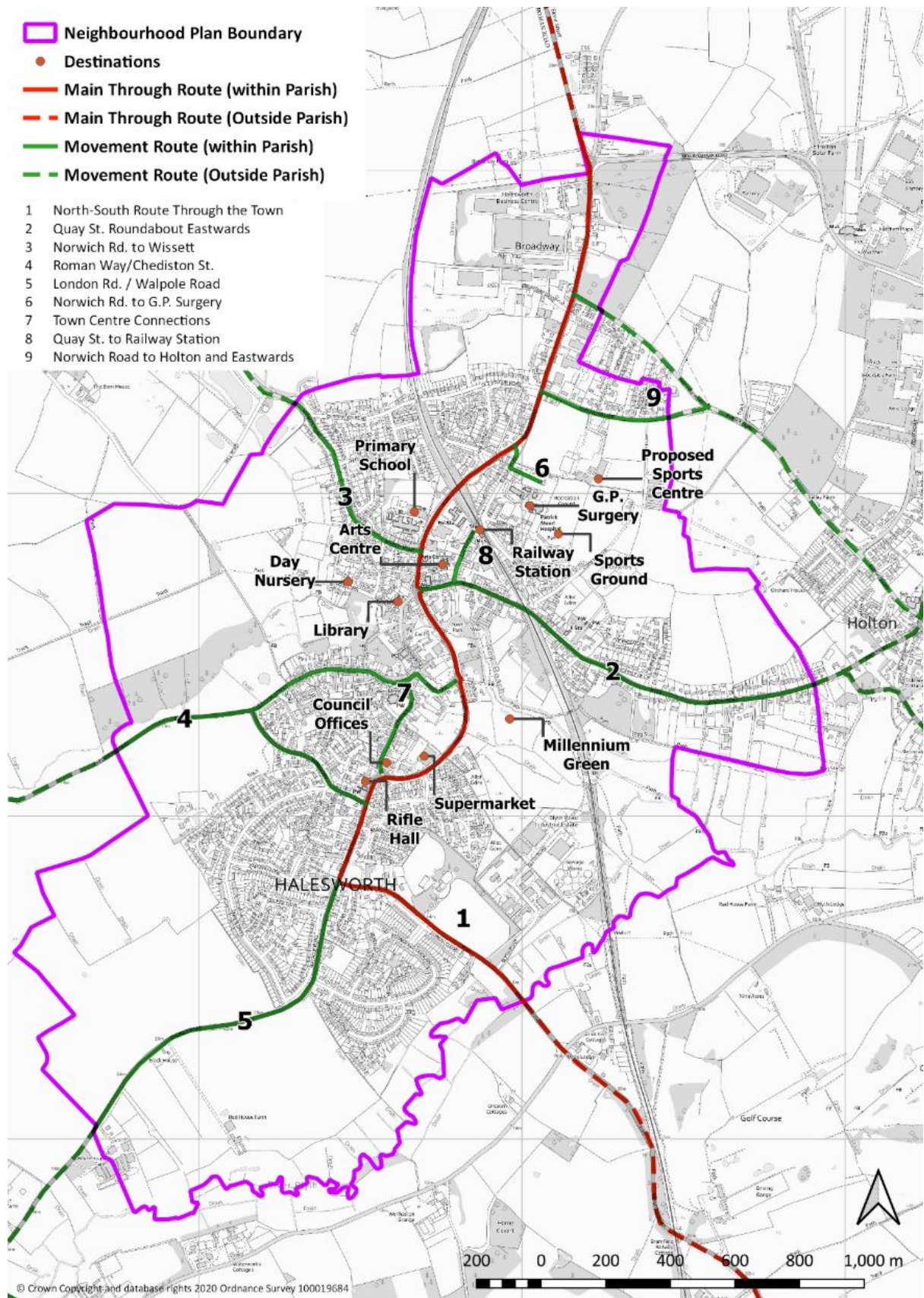
**Figure 9.7: Proposed route around the south-west of the town**



9.39 Drawing this analysis and recommendations together creates a series of 'Key Movement Routes' where access for walking and cycling should be prioritised. These are shown in Figure 9.8.



**Figure 9.8: Key Movement Routes**



**POLICY HAL.TM1: KEY MOVEMENT ROUTES**

- A. Development proposals which would improve cycling and walking in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported. In particular, provision of segregated cycle and pedestrian routes will be strongly supported. Such routes should also ensure that access by disabled users, the blind and deaf and users of mobility scooters is secured.**
- B. To ensure that residents can access public transport facilities, schools, leisure and other important facilities serving Halesworth, where practicable development proposals should ensure safe and continuous pedestrian routes that connect to the Key Movement Routes shown on the Policies Map.**
- C. Proposals to enhance the identified Key Movement Routes will be supported.**
- D. Development proposals should not have an unacceptable impact on the safety and accessibility of Key Movement Routes. Development proposals should provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian and cycle access on the identified Key Movement Routes.**

**5. Signage**

- 9.40 All the improvements identified to walking and cycling routes need well-designed signage to support usage by residents and visitors. It will be important if the NCR1 is rerouted out of the shopping street that signage supports the many cafes and independent shops used by cyclists and walkers.
- 9.41 Improved signage is a wider issue than just for cyclists and walkers. It is essential for tourism, for the businesses and the places of interest in the town such as The Cut Arts Centre and the Millennium Green. This need is referenced in the Town Centre section of the plan.

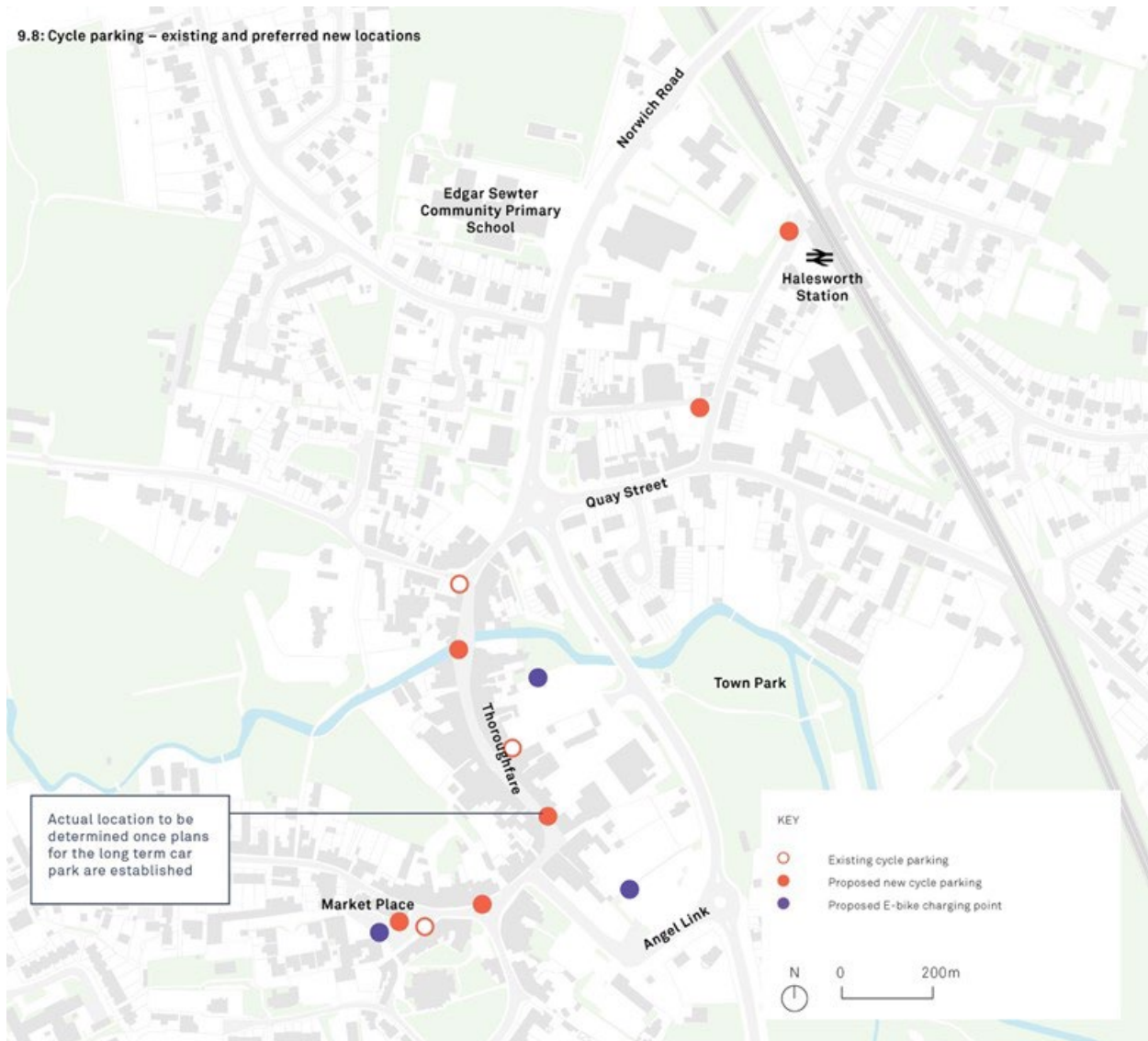
**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: IMPROVED SIGNAGE FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS**

**Halesworth Town Council will take a lead in devising a signage strategy for pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre and commissioning local artists to design signage that best reflects Halesworth.**

**Cycle parking**

- 9.42 The cycling group established a subgroup to look specifically at cycle parking in the town. It is acknowledged that for basic cycle parking to be considered secure, it needs to be located in well used and visible areas such as near shops and cafes.
- 9.43 Figure 9.9 shows the locations where cycle parking is currently provided along with the preferred locations for new parking. The possible development in the long-term car park gives opportunities to secure new cycle parking.

**Figure 9.9: Cycle parking – existing and preferred new locations**



- 9.44 E-bike charging points need to be considered as part of a broader infrastructure development alongside car charging. There are three areas of town that are logical locations for e-bike charging points – the Market Place, the central car park and the Angel car park near to the hotel.



#### **POLICY HAL.TM2: CYCLE PARKING**

**A. Development proposals to provide new bicycle parking in Halesworth will be supported. Development proposals should be located in a well-used, visible location for security and should be designed to avoid obstructing the movement of pedestrians and mobility-impaired users. Where practicable such provision should be designed to support parking by cargo bikes and other non-standard bikes.**

**B. In particular, commercial and tourist development proposals should maximise the provision of secure cycle parking for workers and customers wherever practicable.**

### **Electric vehicles**

- 9.45 The national shift to electric vehicles is now in law, with the requirement that no new petrol or diesel cars are sold after 2030. It is therefore vital that new development provides charging points and the appropriate supporting infrastructure. Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.21 (Sustainable Transport) supports developments that include facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Suffolk County Council parking standards<sup>21</sup> gives guidance on the minimum specification of charging facilities by use, but simply says that such charging points are to be provided. In particular, larger houses with multiple off-street parking spaces will require potentially more than one charging point or at least the ability for additional charging points to be installed (with the associated capacity in the household electrical system). The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that such provision is explicitly included in the proposals for all residential development.
- 9.46 It should be noted that new Building Regulation (Approved Document S: Infrastructure for the charging of electric vehicles) comes into effect on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This will require all new-build homes to with associated parking to have electric vehicle charging points.

#### **POLICY HAL.TM3: RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING**

**Proposals for new residential properties with off-street parking should provide charging points for electric vehicles to the most up to date published national standards.**

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<sup>21</sup> Suffolk County Council (2019) *Suffolk Guidance for Parking: Technical Guidance*, Third Edition

## 10 HALESWORTH TOWN CENTRE

- 10.1 Halesworth's Town Centre is made up of distinct parts, offering a range of experiences – the Thoroughfare for shopping and eating; art and culture at The Cut, Halesworth Gallery and the Museum; the town centre's fine heritage architecture; an historic church, and the Millennium Green with its wide-open spaces. These are the things residents like about the town and wanted to see protected. However, people also expressed concerns about the economic sustainability of the Thoroughfare. Previous sections of this Plan – Economic Development, Movement and Transport and Heritage and Design - refer to the town centre. This section brings these different strands together.
- 10.2 The following objective was subject to a range of consultation exercises and received strong community approval.
- Better integrate the distinct parts of the Town Centre and make it a place where more people want to come and spend their time and support the local economy***
- 10.3 Given the economic importance of the town centre, Halesworth Town Council commissioned architects, We Made That, to undertake a study focusing on improving connectivity within the town centre and enhancing its different features. The full report can be accessed here: <https://halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk/town-centre-connectivity-report/>.
- 10.4 Following the appraisal process and consultations with the public and a range of other stakeholders, both statutory and business, the study made proposals focused on four geographic parts of the town. These are detailed and costed in the full report and summarised below. It is important to recognise that these are potential indicative solutions to address the issues raised by the community and addressed through the technical assessment. They do not represent fixed solutions and Policy HAL.TC1 seeks to provide flexibility so that the solutions brought forward through planning applications are the most appropriate.

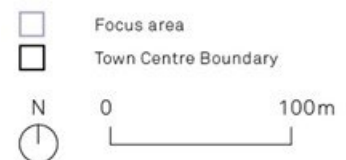
**Fig 10.1: Four Focus Areas across the Town Centre**



### Key

#### Focus areas

1. Station Links
2. Long-term car park site and Town Park
3. Thoroughfare to Market Place
4. Swan Lane environs



### 1. Station links

- 10.5 The area between the railway station and the town centre contains a number of historic and cultural assets, most notably the Halesworth Museum in the Station building, The Cut Arts Centre and the Library positioned at the head of the shopping street. These assets are currently under-celebrated. Routes between the station and the town centre are dominated by roads and parking. This gives an opportunity to create a better public realm that improves the settings of these important buildings and better spaces for pedestrians, creating a series of 'moments' along the route between the station and town centre.
- 10.6 The possible improvements identified focus on four areas:

**Figure 10.2: Four potential project areas in Station Links**



#### A. Station and Museum



New hard landscaping on approaching the Station would create a better setting for the museum. Seating and landscaping would encourage people to stop and appreciate the unique moveable platform. New signage would advertise the presence of the museum and the platform and wayfinding points would direct visitors to the town centre, The Cut and other destinations. Cycle parking and cycle hire could be explored.



B. New Cut



The access to The Cut is uninviting. A new footway and carriage treatment on New Cut would make the centre more visible, accessible, and safer when approaching from Station Road. This would require the removal of the parking spaces outside The Cut. The car park in front would be improved with a raised planter on Station Road to replace the chain link fence and a new stair from the car park would create a direct link between the car park and The Cut.

C. Quay Street roundabout



The roundabout creates a barrier to the town centre despite two controlled crossing. Improvements for pedestrians and cyclists are needed considering proposals for new cycle routes in the Movement section of the plan. Further detailed study is required. Signage for pedestrians to take them to the Thoroughfare and the Millennium Green is needed.

D. Library crossing



The Library is separated from the pedestrianised Bridge St / Thoroughfare. A raised heritage paving table crossing to link the end of the Thoroughfare and the Library entrance would improve the setting, create a sense of pedestrian priority and act to calm traffic speeds.

## 2. Long term car park site and Town Park

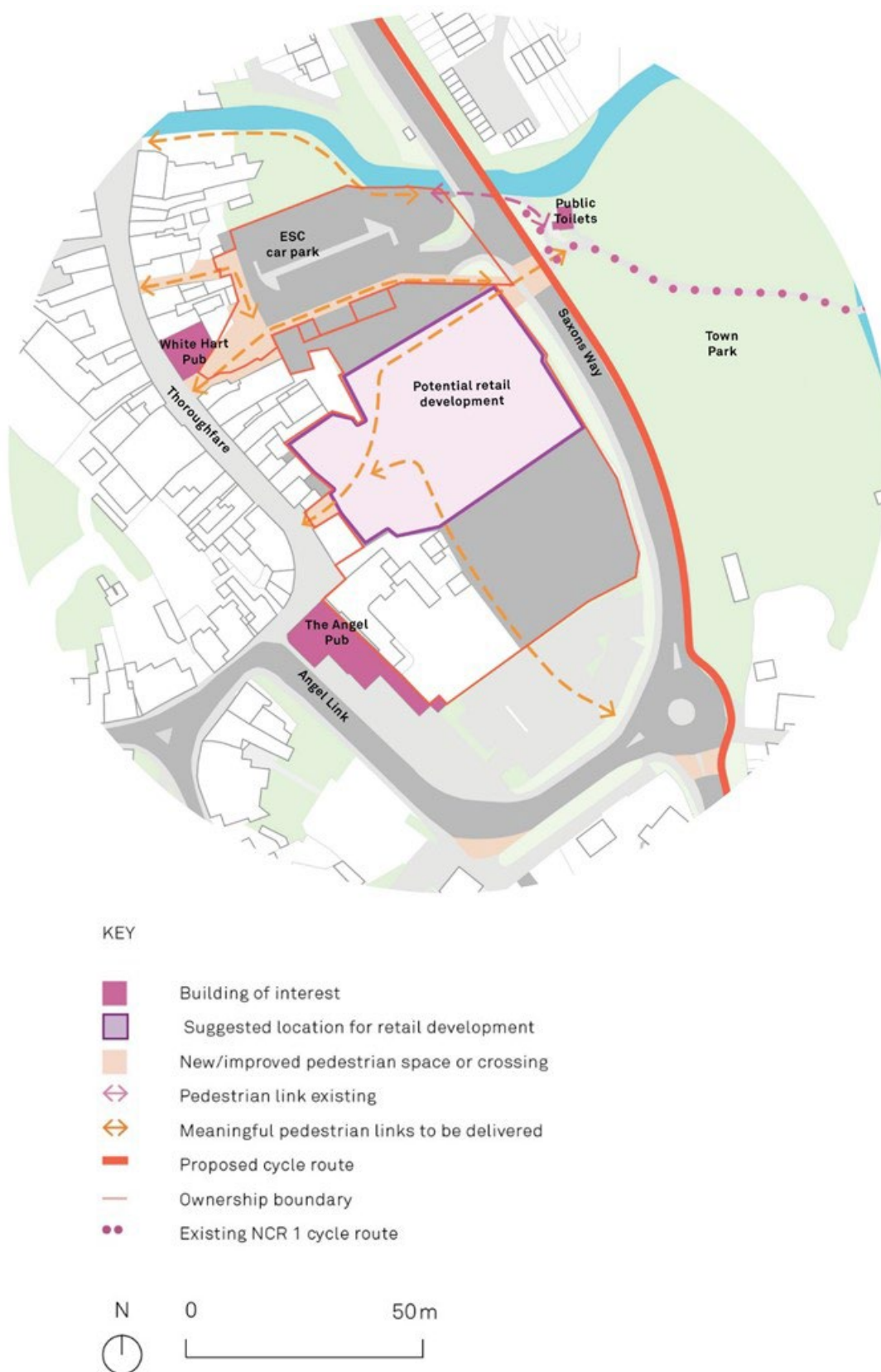
- 10.7 Town Park and the Millennium Green are separated from the Thoroughfare by Saxons Way and car parks. The car parks play a valuable role in serving the town centre for those arriving by car but create a hostile environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The link between the town and the park is unclear, and the pedestrian route to the park is an underpass accessed from the car park, which is liable to flooding in winter. There is no direct street level safety crossing and people (including children) frequently walk across what is the busiest road in the town, often at the junction of the Thoroughfare car park.
- 10.8 There is interest in developing the site to the south of the area, known as the long-term car park and a small site to the north which runs along the river side. This opens up the potential to improve connections across this area and into Town Park and into the Thoroughfare. Site assessment work<sup>22</sup> undertaken to support the Neighbourhood Plan concluded that the site is suitable for redevelopment for a mix of uses including retail, enterprise, business and housing. The site is within the Primary Shopping Area and has potential to be further considered with the adjacent car park to the north as an extension to the primary or secondary shopping area.
- 10.9 The town centre study proposed three different scenarios - residential development, a mix of residential and community use and retail development. The same connectivity principles apply to them all. These are:
- Improved pedestrian and cycle routes across the car park
  - A well-designed route through any potential development
  - A new pedestrian and cycle crossing over Saxons Way
  - A pedestrian link across to Angel Link
  - Potential riverside connection including improvements to the underpass
- 10.10 Figure 10.3 shows one possible way that improvements could be made to connectivity.

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<sup>22</sup> AECOM (2020) *Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan: Site Options and Assessment*, for Halesworth Town Council



**Figure 10.3: A potential retail development to illustrate the possible improvements to connectivity**



### 3. Thoroughfare to Market Place

- 10.11 Market Place forms part of the Primary Retail Area of Halesworth which should be continuous from the Thoroughfare. There is a dramatic change in public space from the shared level surface of the Thoroughfare Pedestrian Zone to the narrow footways where it connects to Market Place. This means the perception is that the retail space stops here. Market Place itself is out of view from the end of the Pedestrian Zone, but it is the nature of the streetscape and narrow footways that suggests there is nothing more to discover beyond this point.
- 10.12 Market Place itself is dominated by car parking (30 spaces). This combined with narrow footways undermines its former (and potentially future) role as an additional part of the social and economic heart of the town, as well as obscuring its heritage buildings. These conditions have limited the types of successful businesses found on Market Place.

**Figure 10.4: Possible new connections between the Thoroughfare and Market Place**



- 10.13 Interventions here aim to create a better visual and accessible link between the Thoroughfare and Market Place (marked 'A' on Figure 10.4). Rather than creating a continuation of the material

treatment, which could be dangerous given the change in function to a roadway, there is scope to increase footway widths and create much more pedestrian space at the junction of Market Place and London Road. A second initiative is to create a sense of arrival at Market Place, currently dominated by parked cars (marked 'B'). Parking provision and capacity in Halesworth will need to be assessed in order to properly determine impacts of any proposed changes.

10.14 The potential projects to achieve the above are:



10.15 Create an improved visual connection between Market Place and Thoroughfare through changes to the junction at Market Place and Thoroughfare. The central island is removed enabling an extended pedestrian area and creating an inviting space near to the entrance to the church yard. Planting and seating encourage people to dwell and create a visual link from the Thoroughfare suggesting further activity in the Market Place. The roadway remains two-way and it would be important to ensure that vehicular movement did not make users feel unsafe.



- 10.16 Test the reduction of parking spaces from 30 to 20 within Market Place to create more space for pedestrians. To trial the part-pedestrianisation, temporary planters will bring greenery to the square and also create temporary barriers to one of the vehicle access routes. They will define a space that is safe for pedestrians and can be used for seating and other activities. The entrance and exit route will be unchanged at the western end of Market Place.



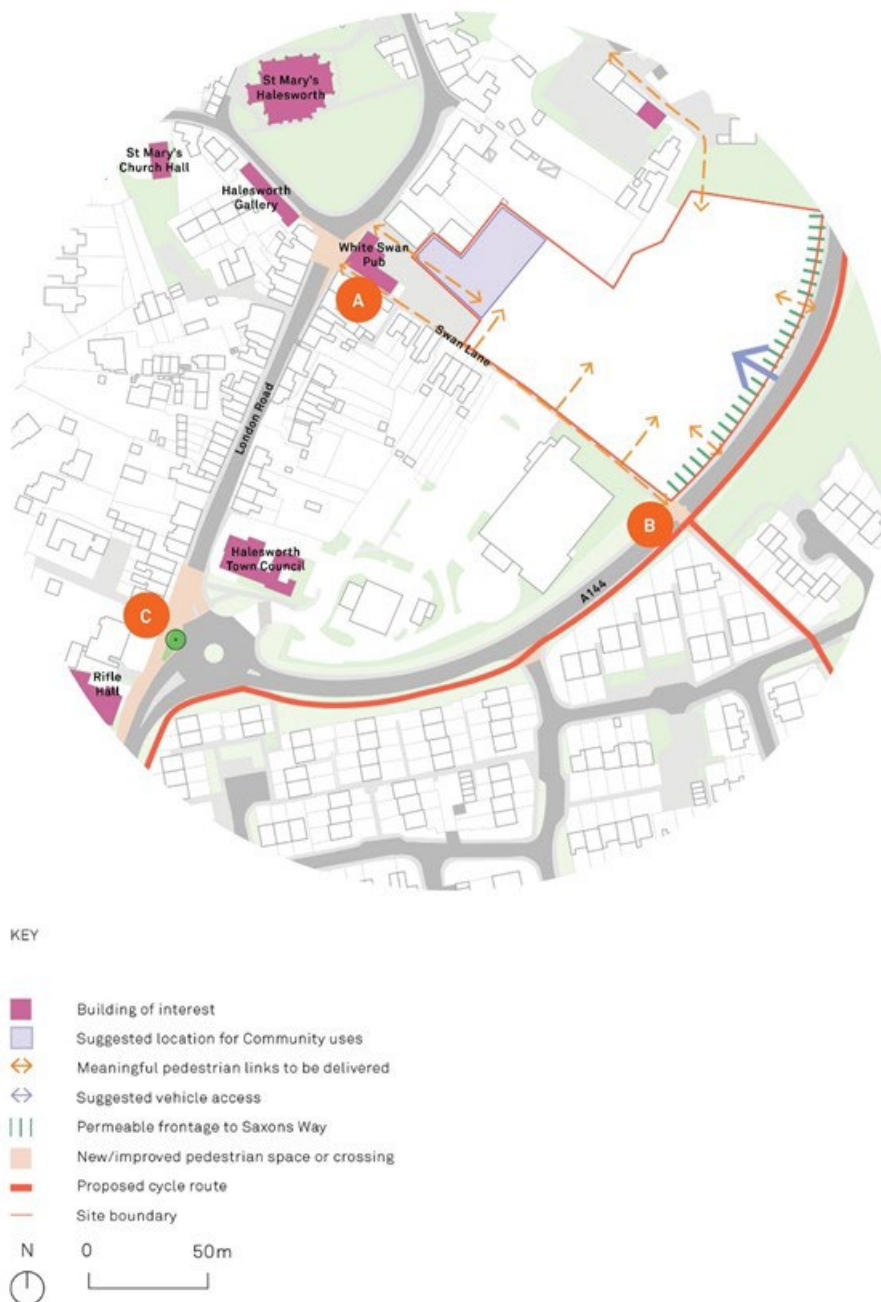
- 10.17 Create a permanent pedestrian plaza at the eastern end of Market Place. On arriving from Thoroughfare, a new paved pedestrian space will create an improved setting for listed buildings and businesses surrounding the square. Planting and public seating provide places to dwell, while the otherwise open 'plaza' allows for a variety of activities including the weekly market, and seating, possibly for a café. 20 car parking places will be laid out.



#### 4. Swan Lane environs

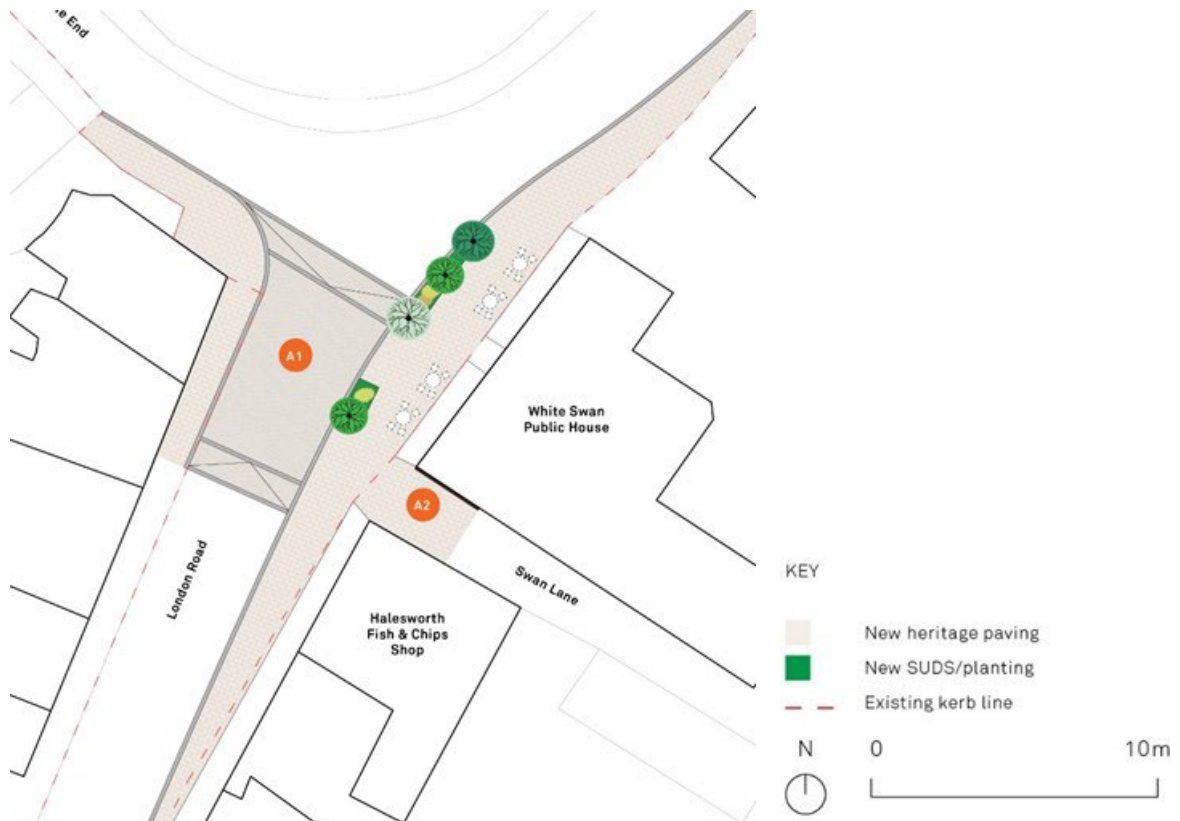
- 10.18 Swan Lane and the area it connects to is in many ways the historic centre of Halesworth, centred around St. Mary's Church and connecting into Market Place. The Halesworth Gallery sits within a listed building overlooking the churchyard, along with a pub, a fish and chip shop, and a number of other small outlets. Swan lane itself is a well-used footpath connecting residential neighbourhoods to the southeast. But footways in the area are very narrow to non-existent, and though London Road is relatively quiet at this point, it still feels unsafe to be in the road when traffic is around.
- 10.19 Possible interventions in this area are about making useful links more usable by creating improved road crossings and improving entrances and gateway moments.

**Figure 10.5: Map of Swan Lane environs showing location of potential projects**



**A. Swan Lane entrance** - create a better gateway into London Road

- 10.20 Arriving along London Road to Swan Lane, hardscaping and planting would create an improved setting for the shops, pub and gallery at this junction. Extended footways create an improved setting for the White Swan Public House and more space for pedestrians to access the other businesses here. A raised table crossing creates better access between Swan Lane and Steeple End, the gallery, the church and Market Place beyond. The raised table crossing will also calm traffic speeds and bring a sense of pedestrian priority.





### B. Saxons Way crossing

- 10.21 As noted elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan, only one controlled crossing exists along the whole of the by-pass, Saxons Way and that is at the other end of the road from the Swan Lane footway. A new controlled crossing is proposed which would help residents, many of whom are elderly, from the Lansbury Road estate, to have safer access to town centre and to the Coop store. The Movement section of the Plan suggests that Swan Lane becomes a shared cycle path and if this is taken forward then a 'tiger crossing' (a zebra crossing with cycle facilities) would be required.

### C. London Road Gateway

- 10.22 Arriving along London Road from the south an area of planting, trees and seating (retaining vehicular access to the neighbouring house) would create a welcoming gateway into Halesworth Town Centre. A raised table crossing point across the entrance into London Road indicates to traffic to slow down and would support pedestrians to cross to the Coop store.



- 10.23 This focus area also includes an identified Local Plan development site between Swan Lane and Saxons Way. The Local Plan includes provision for community facilities on the site located at the Angel Link end. Proposals by We Made That suggests an alternative location to an area of the site next to Swan Lane as shown in Fig 10.5. This would bring more active uses to this end of town. Vehicle access from Saxons Way needs to create a through route and good public pedestrian connectivity is required.

**Next steps to take forward a programme of improvements to Connectivity**

- 10.24 The Town Centre report outlines the key logistics such as planning, statutory permissions, costs, sustainability and accessibility required to bring these projects forward. Table 10.1 sets out the report's suggestions as to the next steps needed to reach decisions as to which of the proposals could be taken forward. Further public consultation will be needed on any final proposals.

**Table 10.1: Next steps for potential Town Centre improvements**

Timeframe	Actions
1 to 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise projects for potential CIL funding or Section 278 agreement</li> <li>• Engage with Printworks site landowners to establish ambitions for connectivity</li> <li>• Further engagement with Stakeholders such as The Cut and Halesworth Museum to establish specific ambitions and concerns</li> <li>• Liaise with market traders and businesses around Market Place to determine concerns and establish ambitions for the space</li> <li>• Work with ESC and The People and Places Partnership to commission a parking capacity study once people's movement is back to pre-Covid levels</li> <li>• Continue to work with ESC and SCC highways to develop cycling strategies</li> <li>• Continue to work with ESC Planning Department to guide connectivity issues relating to upcoming development</li> </ul>
4 months to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage architects/landscape designers to undertake design development of priority projects that could be funded through CIL</li> <li>• Commission local artists to develop designs for wayfinding and signage</li> <li>• Continue to work with Sustrans, ESC, and SCC to develop a strategy for re-routing NCR1</li> <li>• Continue to work with ESC Planning Department to guide development in meeting the principles set out in the connectivity study</li> </ul>
1 year to 5+ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with ESC Planning Department to guide development to meeting the principles of the connectivity study</li> <li>• Work with ESC to seek funding and delivery the wayfinding strategy</li> <li>• Work with ESC Planning and Highways to identify and deliver highways projects to be delivered by developers via section 278 agreements</li> <li>• Identify other funding opportunities to deliver other projects in the connectivity study</li> </ul>

**POLICY HAL.TC1: ENHANCING HALESWORTH TOWN CENTRE**

**Proposals which enhance the quality and accessibility (specifically for pedestrians and disabled users) of the public realm in Halesworth Town Centre will be supported. In particular such proposals should reflect the principles that informed the public realm and movement solutions and projects identified in Section 10 of this Neighbourhood Plan.**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: TOWN CENTRE PROPOSALS**

**Halesworth Town Council to set up a working group to consider, in the first instance, the initial three-month programme of next steps. The working group will report back to Halesworth Town Council at an agreed date with proposed priorities and the work programme required.**

- 10.25 In previous surveys of residents and businesses and during the consultation for this Plan two other aspects of connectivity and movement within the town centre have been highlighted as needing attention.

**Movement and traffic on the Thoroughfare**

- 10.26 Following the opening of the ring road in 1989 the Thoroughfare became a pedestrianised area regulated by a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). In theory this gives vehicle access to only certain Thoroughfare users – residents, blue badge vehicles and delivery vehicles to retail units. Cycling is allowed north to south, and the northern section is a two way part of the National Cycle Route 1 (see Movement and Transport section for details). Parking is not allowed, except for offloading and within the limitation of the Blue Badge scheme. There has been little enforcement of the regulations leading to considerable traffic on the street creating confusion for all users and safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 10.27 In 2017, Halesworth Town Council (HTC) set up an Urban Infrastructure Working Group. It undertook a thorough consultation with residents and businesses to gauge their views on the traffic situation in the town including a focus on the Thoroughfare. The results showed that 81% of respondents thought the Thoroughfare should be fully pedestrianised, 98% said cyclists should dismount both ways and 91% thought delivery vans should use a designated area in the car park. These findings are supported by the responses to the more recent NP consultations.
- 10.28 As part of the post Covid Safer Streets initiative Suffolk County Council issued a TRO closing the Thoroughfare between 10am and 2pm each weekday. A staffed barrier at the top of Bridge Street prevented entry other than to the limited number of users with a permit. Informal feedback to the town council, from residents and businesses to these arrangements has been positive. However, once the staffed barrier no longer operated, traffic and parking rapidly increased on the Thoroughfare despite the TRO still being in force. An increase on online purchasing has also increased the numbers of parcel delivery vans.
- 10.29 Suffolk County Council is due to review these arrangements by March 2022. It is therefore an opportune time to look for a more permanent and properly enforceable solution to the management of the TRO including permanent barriers that can limit access to only those with permits.

- 10.30 In September 2021 the Town Council agreed to set up a working group to consider future traffic management in the Thoroughfare and to make proposals as to the best feasible solution. The Town Centre report contains some pointers as to the kind of barriers that could be considered. The NPSG strongly supports this work by the Town Council as further limiting traffic and better management of the rules would make the Thoroughfare a more appealing place for residents and visitors to spend time. This in turn would support the economic sustainability of Halesworth's retail and tourist offer.

### **Signage and wayfinding**

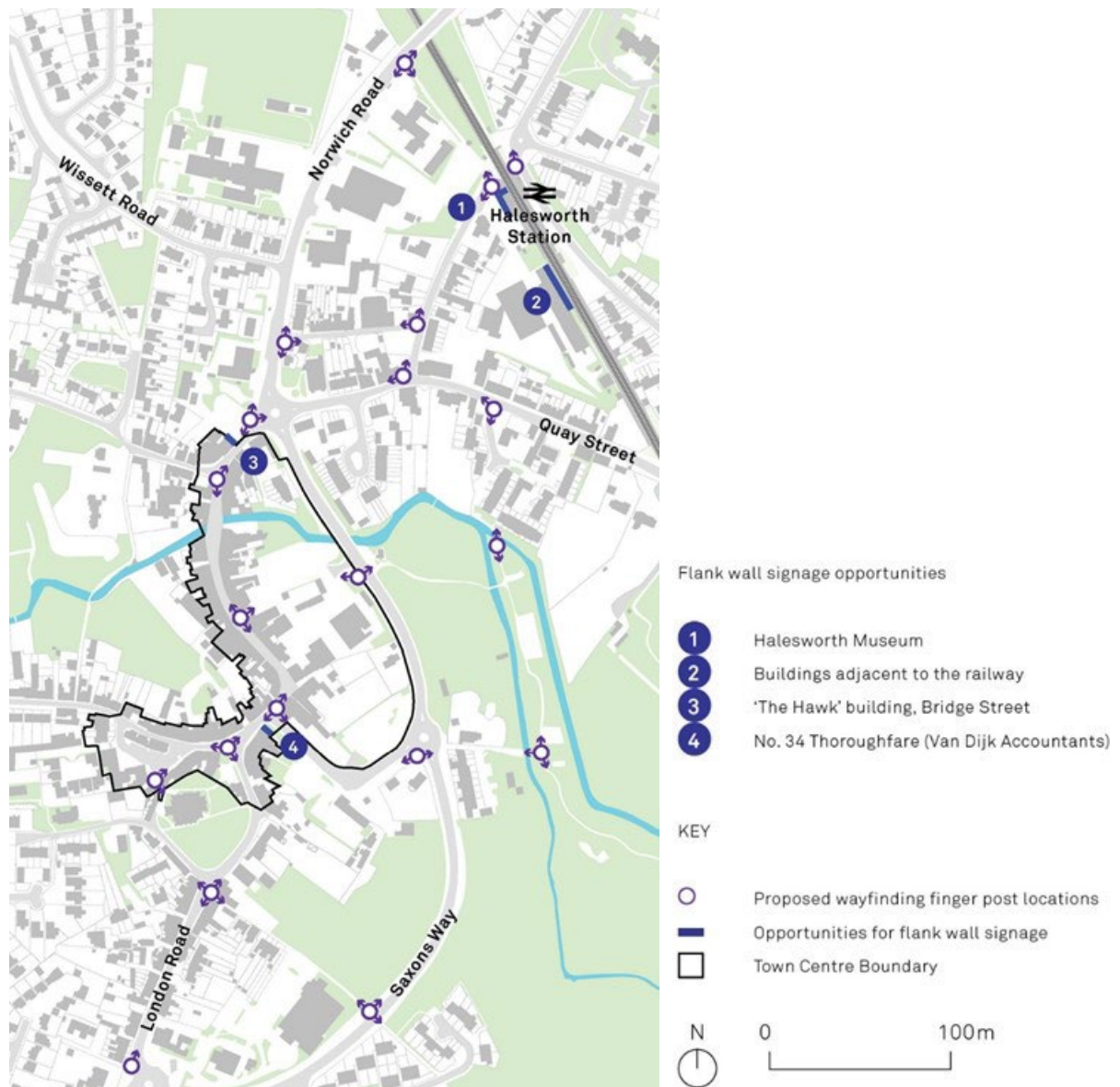
- 10.31 When coming out of Halesworth Railway Station, a visitor would not know what direction to take to the town centre or what they might find there. The Museum, located in the station building, is easily missed. Once in the Thoroughfare they would be unaware that the largest Millennium Green in England is just a minute away. The photograph below encourages visitors to stop at the end of the Thoroughfare as nothing indicates that the Market Place is hidden from view around the corner to the right. The map on the left of the photo is headed 'The Market Place' but is wrongly positioned and creates more confusion.



### ***Lack of signage to the Market Place***

- 10.32 The Town Centre report proposals as to where finger post way-marking signs and flank wall signage could be located to replace the present limited number of uncoordinated signs around the town which tend to add to clutter on the streets and are often ineffective. A new signage system should incorporate a holistic design approach throughout the town, reduce clutter on the streets and make Halesworth's assets more visible and easier to find for visitors to the town. Designs will need to be developed to enhance and complement the character of the town.

**Figure 10.6: Way finding proposals**



- 10.33 The People and Places initiative, led by the Economic Development team at East Suffolk Council have included signage in the action plan designed to improve the economic sustainability of the town. This action has been allocated to HTC and NPSG to take forward. The project will require engagement with residents and businesses in order to achieve sign-off of design proposals. Engagement with businesses and landowners where flank wall signage is proposed will be of particular importance.



**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ACTION: SIGNAGE AND WAY FINDING**

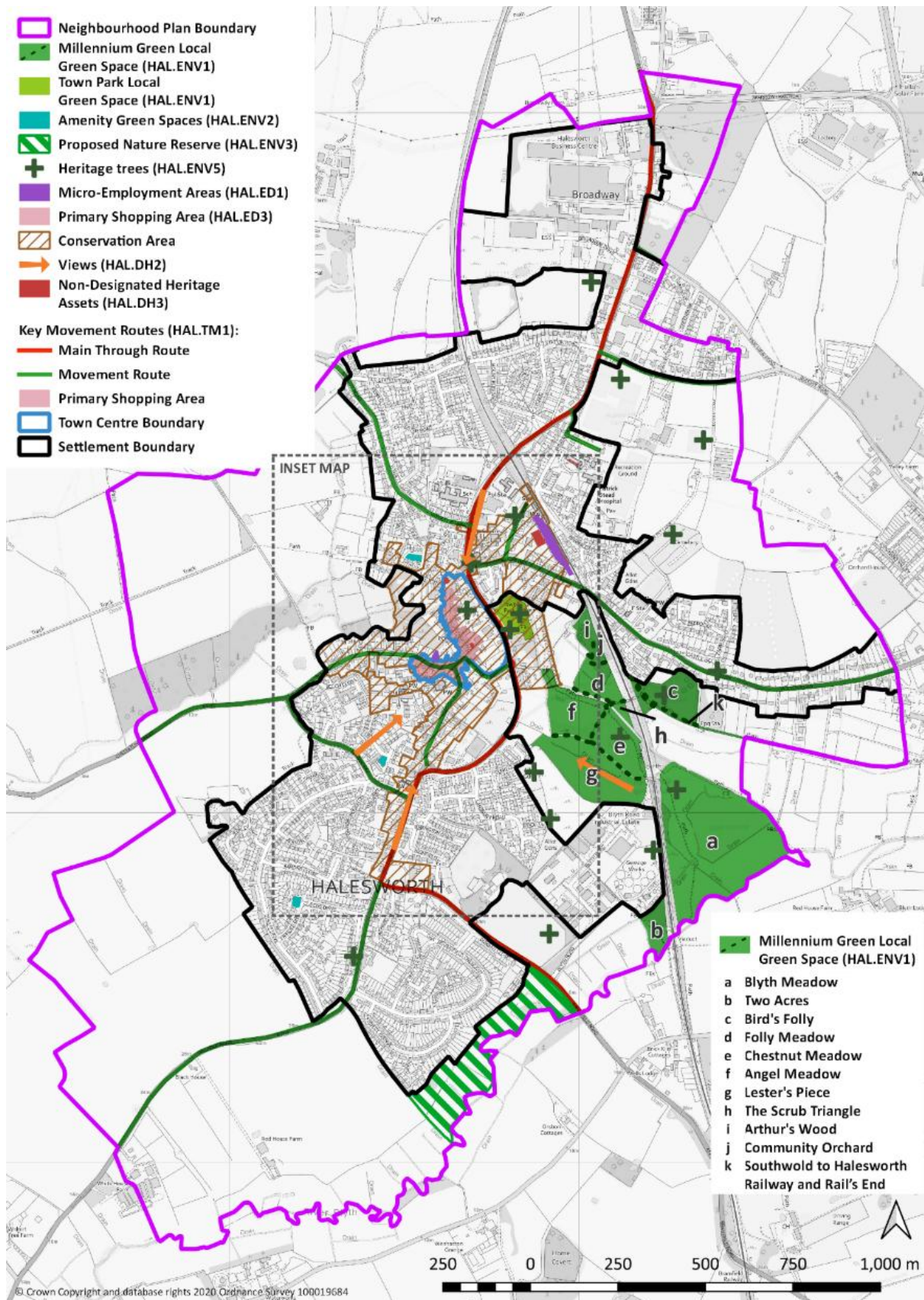
**Halesworth Town Council, with partner organisations in the People and Places action group, to take a lead on setting up a design team, including professional input where necessary, to scope, propose and implement improvements to the signage and wayfinding for Halesworth. Consultation with businesses and residents will be essential.**

**Design in the Town Centre**

- 10.34 As shown in the Design and Heritage section of this plan Halesworth has an extensive conservation area which covers much of the town centre as defined from the Station through to the roundabout at London Road and Saxons Way. Conservation area status ensures that development properly reflects the historic character of the area.
- 10.35 Any development proposals that impact on the area and on listed buildings should positively contribute to the setting through appropriate choice of scale, mass, height and materials. The historic and active frontages of the independent shops and cafes along Bridge Street, the Thoroughfare and the Market Place should be retained and enhanced where possible.
- 10.36 Any proposed street furniture needs to enhance the character and complement the existing historic street furniture including lighting, seating, and signage. Modern materials that complement the street scene may be appropriate where they might enhance the local character.

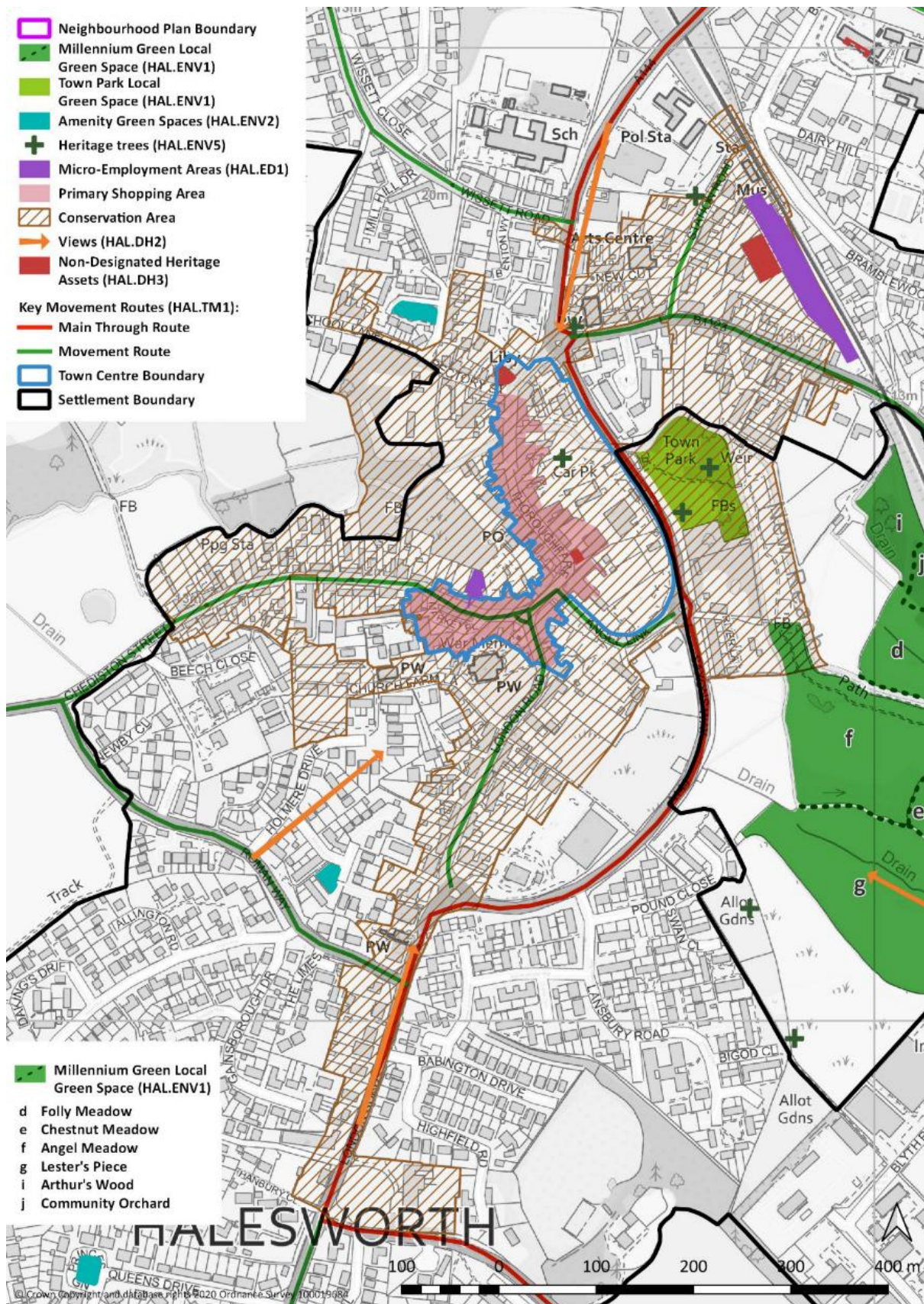


## 11 POLICIES MAP





## INSET MAP



## Appendix 1      Proposed new north-south route including National Cycle Network Route 1

The **northern section** of this new route would be up Norwich Road from Quay Street to Spexhall Road/ Triple Plea roundabout in the north. At present a shared cycle track goes only part way along the Norwich Road (A144) on the eastern side as far as Harrisons Lane. Cyclists, if they use it, have to stop at numerous entrances and roads. The NPSG recommends a new route along the western side of Norwich Road. The NCR1 route follows the present shared pavement route but at Harrisons Lane veers off towards Holton before turning north again. The route along Norwich Road would allow a more direct and safer NCR1 beyond the town boundary.

At the south the route has to cross Norwich Road to continue down the main pedestrianised shopping road, into a car park before going under a small underpass to come out into the Park and onto the tarmac cycle track out towards the east and south of the town. The town centre section of the NCR1 is assessed as Red or Amber by Sustrans. See Figure 9.3.

For the **central section** of the new route the group proposes a cycle track along the eastern edge of Saxons Way round to the Coop roundabout at London Road. The two existing pedestrian crossings on Norwich Road and Quay Street would connect the Norwich Road section to the Saxons Way section.

As cycling is not allowed northwards along the Thoroughfare there is no easy, direct cycle route to and from the south and west of the town.

Removing the NCR1 from the shopping street and car park would offer a much safer and pleasanter environment for pedestrians and this change is supported by residents in consultations held over the years and is supported by Sustrans.

The Saxons Way b-pass was built with no regard for cycling and retrofitting a route will need local authorities and developers working together to make it happen. Suffolk County Council does own grass verges along the eastern side of Saxons Way and there are potentially three developments along the route that give opportunities for Section 106 and CIL contributions towards the creation of a new route.

The **southern section** from London Road/Coop roundabout along London Road and left into Bramfield Road would create better connectivity for the housing on the southern edge of town, to the industrial estate and would link to the NCR1 as it crosses Bramfield Road.

Consideration has been given to an alternative that would allow the NCR1 to be rerouted from the shopping street and to mitigate some of the difficulties that achieving the Saxons Way route might pose in the short term. However, the alternative itself poses problems caused by the narrowness of a small stretch of road, the need to change a footpath into a bridleway, the need to get permission to use a private road and a narrow bridge! Just some of the challenges faced in a market town when trying to improve cycling!

# HALESWORTH

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE



# Oulton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036

Agenda Item 13

ES/1461



Referendum Version December 2022

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## Introduction

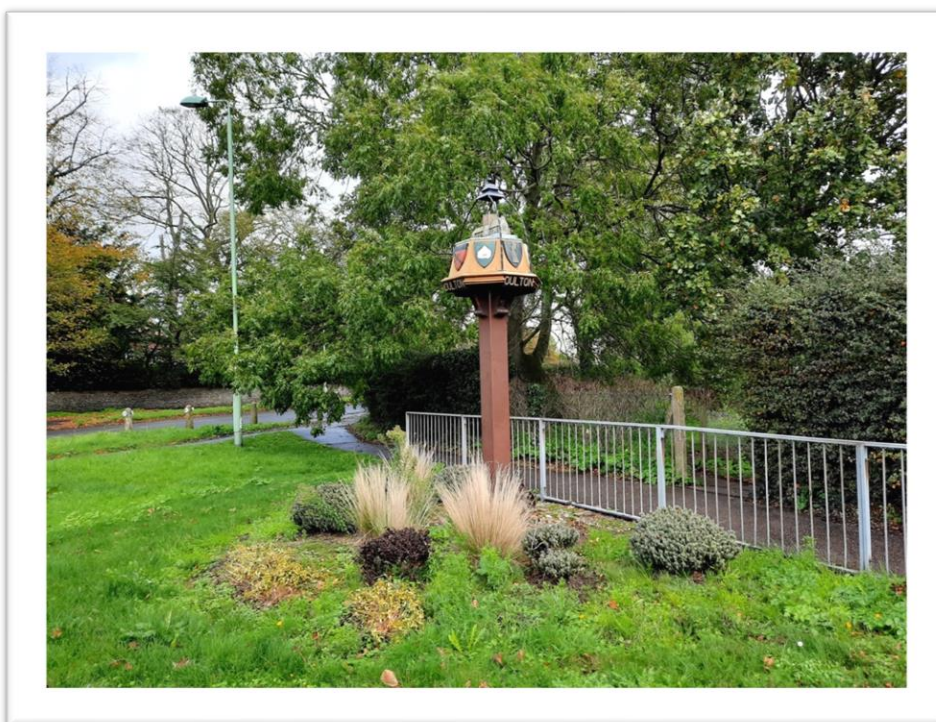
1. This is the Neighbourhood Plan for Oulton. A Neighbourhood Plan, once completed and 'made' by the district council and Broads Authority, is used to help make decisions on planning applications in the parish. It has been developed by a working group of local people and parish councillors, set up under the auspices of the parish council, and with the involvement of the wider community. As well as having planning policies that will be used to assess planning applications, it also has Community Actions. These aren't used to make planning decisions, but they can be used by the parish council and the community of Oulton to focus our efforts in the future to ensure that Oulton remains a wonderful place to live.
2. Oulton Parish and village, which neighbours Oulton Broad and its separate parish, is around two miles northwest of the town of Lowestoft. It is one of the larger villages in East Suffolk, with a resident population of over 4,000. Together with Lowestoft, Carlton Colville, Corton, and Oulton Broad it is the largest built-up area in the District with a combined population of nearly 70,000 people. Indeed, the adopted East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan treats Oulton as part of the built-up area of Lowestoft and part of the parish effectively forms the settlement edge of Lowestoft.
3. In the main the parish falls within East Suffolk district (formerly Waveney), whilst the marshes to the west are within the Broads Authority Executive Area.
4. There are a number of county wildlife sites within the parish, including Oulton Marshes which is a Suffolk Wildlife Trust nature reserve. Sprat's Water and Marshes, Carlton Colville lies adjacent the area and is designated for its biodiversity importance internationally. There is good access into nature and the countryside from the built-up area of Oulton, by public rights of way.
5. There is good access to a range of facilities at Oulton Broad, as well as in Lowestoft, although there are local facilities such as schools, the community centre and the Blue Boar within the parish. The church of St Michael, which is grade I listed, falls somewhat outside of the village centre.
6. The 'heart' of the village is the Community Centre on Meadow Road. Here there are a large number of events and activities, including yoga, brownies, children's ballet, carpet bowls, art, keep fit, and line dancing. There are usually well over 200 bookings for different activities each month, so it is very well used by a variety of groups. This is an indication of a thriving and very engaged community.
7. The main thoroughfare through the village is the B1375, the Gorleston Road, which can get busy and, being adjacent to a large number of houses, can dominate. At 4.5km in length, it connects the A146/ A1117 to the south with the A12 to the north. According to a technical report for the Lake Lothing Third Crossing<sup>1</sup>, traffic flows are

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<sup>1</sup> <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR010023/TR010023-000362-7.2%20-%20Transport%20Assessment%20-%20App%20D%20-%20Traffic%20Data%20Collection.pdf>

quite high. The two-way flow in the AM peak hour was 1,068, whilst the two-way flow in the PM peak hour was 1,245. This is around a vehicle every three seconds passing a given point. Although there are footways on both sides, these are very narrow in places, notably Oulton Street just south of the junction with Union Lane where traffic speeds. Even at this natural choke point, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile traffic speeds are around 10mph above the 20mph speed limit, and an average speed of 27mph<sup>2</sup>.

8. Much of the parish is still mainly agricultural and open countryside, although on-going and substantial planned housing growth is impacting on that. There are some large allocations in the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan, some being built out now, which will deliver substantial new housing, including affordable housing. No doubt because of the closeness to Lowestoft, Oulton is accommodating a considerable amount of housing growth, and so is changing. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot stop such growth, but it can influence it. This Neighbourhood Plan aims to build on the strengths of the parish and its community, notably its rural character and strong, valued sense of community. It will enhance the natural environment for wildlife and people, protect key historic assets and the tranquillity, help to tackle climate change, and facilitate opportunities for people to meet and get together. Importantly, if there is any further housing development, the plan aims to ensure it is the right type with the right design. The Neighbourhood Plan is therefore a wonderful opportunity for local people to influence how Oulton changes and grows.



*The Oulton Village Sign, erected in 1990*

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<sup>2</sup> SAM device traffic and speed data from 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 to 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021

# Neighbourhood Planning

## Overview of Neighbourhood Planning

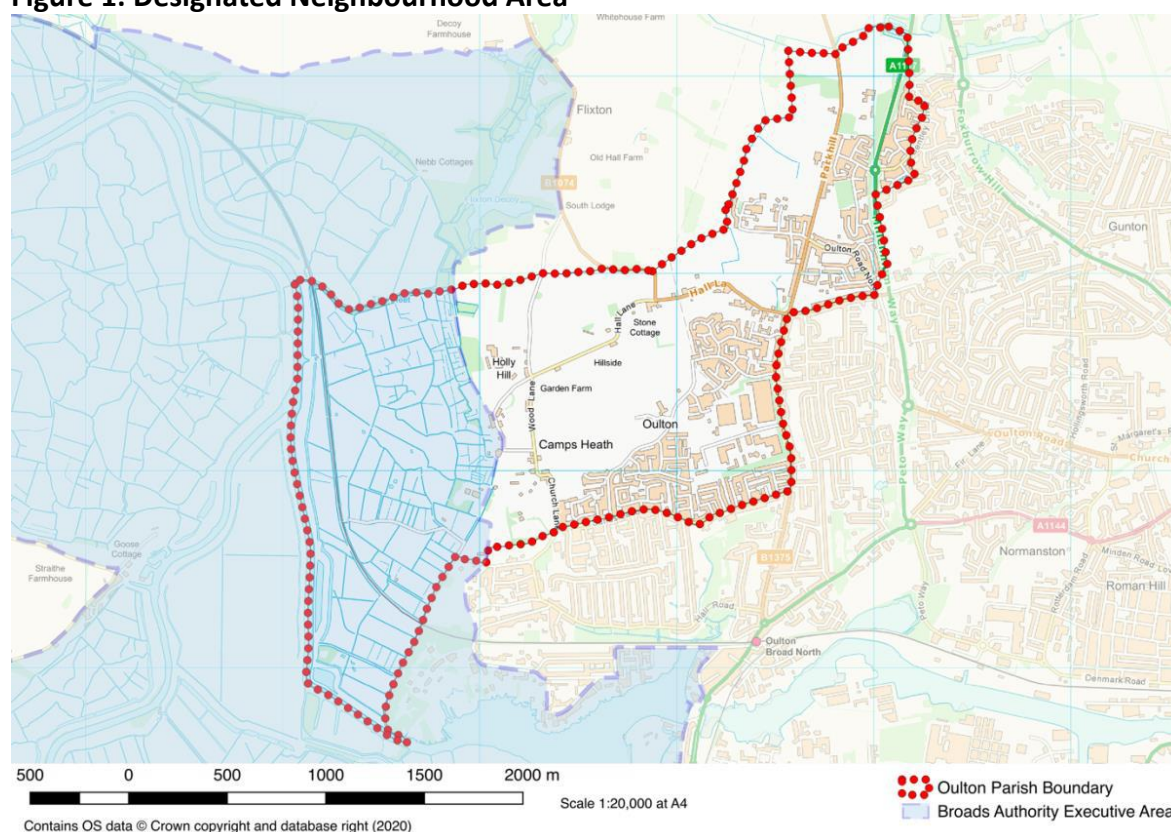
9. Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood Planning legislation came into effect in April 2012 and gives communities the power to agree a Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is an important and powerful tool that gives communities such as parish councils statutory powers to develop a shared vision and shape how their community develops and changes over time.
10. Oulton is in East Suffolk district and so the Neighbourhood Plan sits within the context of the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan, adopted in 2019. Part of the parish is also within the Broads Executive Area, and so it is covered by the Broads Authority and its own recently adopted local plan.
11. The Neighbourhood Plan will be a document that sets out planning policies for the Parish and these will be used, alongside those two local plans, to decide whether planning applications are approved or not. It's a community document, that's written by local people who know and love the area.
12. The Neighbourhood plan has to support the delivery of the 'strategic policies' contained in the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan and that for the Broads Authority, and so it cannot promote less development than set out in local plans. That is, the local plans set the overall strategic policies such as the amount of new development and the distribution of that development across the district and the general protection of the environment.
13. The East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan has allocated land for the planned housing growth in the parish. The total planned growth in the adopted East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan between 2014 to 2036 in the Lowestoft urban area (including Oulton) is 5,206. This growth requires the physical expansion of the urban area of Lowestoft. This includes into Oulton parish and two allocations are expected to deliver 340 dwellings (Land between Hall Lane and Union Lane, and land north of Union Lane). Both of these allocations are scheduled for delivery early in the plan, between 2020 – 2025. The "Woods Meadow" development is a mixed-use allocation from a previous Waveney Local Plan comprising approximately 800 dwellings and supporting facilities including primary school, medical centre, shops and country park. The Broads Local Plan has no proposals for housing within the parish.
14. The Neighbourhood Plan can include 'non-strategic policies', such as the mix of housing, design principles for new development, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, protecting local green spaces from development, and setting out other development management policies. Importantly, the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
15. Once a Neighbourhood Plan has been 'made', following consultation with residents, examination and a local referendum, it becomes part of the statutory development

plan for the parish and will be used by the district council and Broads Authority in deciding on all planning applications in the parish.

## Process of Developing this Neighbourhood Plan

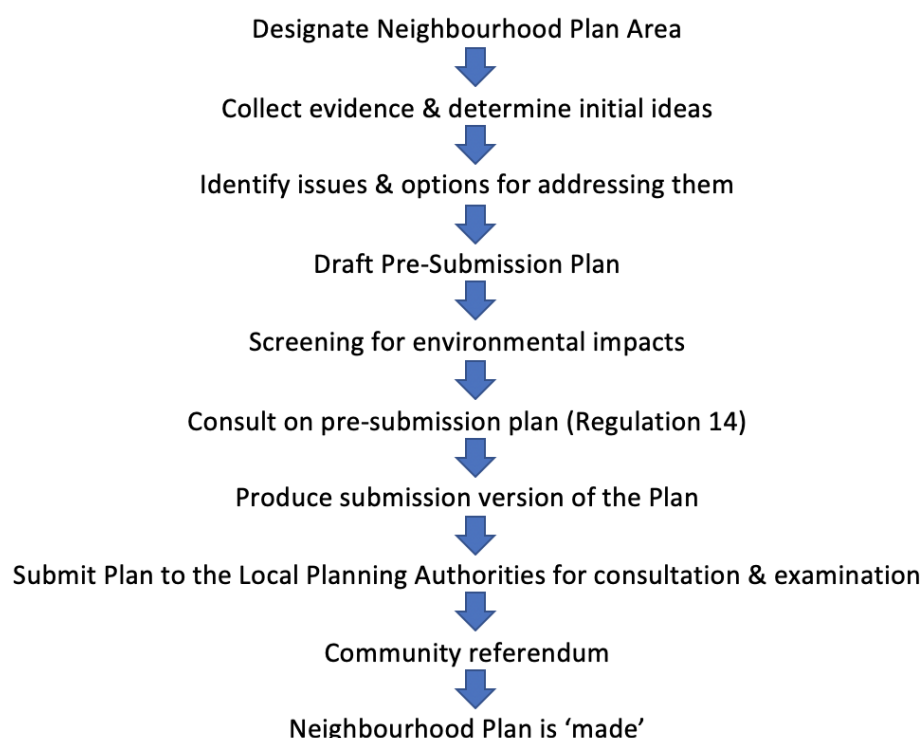
16. The parish area shown in **Figure 1** was designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area in December 2018. Working on behalf of the community, the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has prepared this draft plan that will shape and influence any future development and change across the parish.
17. A broad range of evidence has been reviewed to determine issues and develop policies for the plan. This includes evidence from the Census 2011, housing data, review of environmental designations, Index of Multiple Deprivation, and historical records. Further assessment to gather new evidence has also been undertaken, including an assessment of key views, all supported by consultation activities with the community.
18. Any new development should serve both current and future residents. The policies contained within this plan will enable us to influence the design and type of any new homes being delivered in the parish, as well as ensuring infrastructure improvements are delivered alongside growth so as to maximise community benefit.

**Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Area**





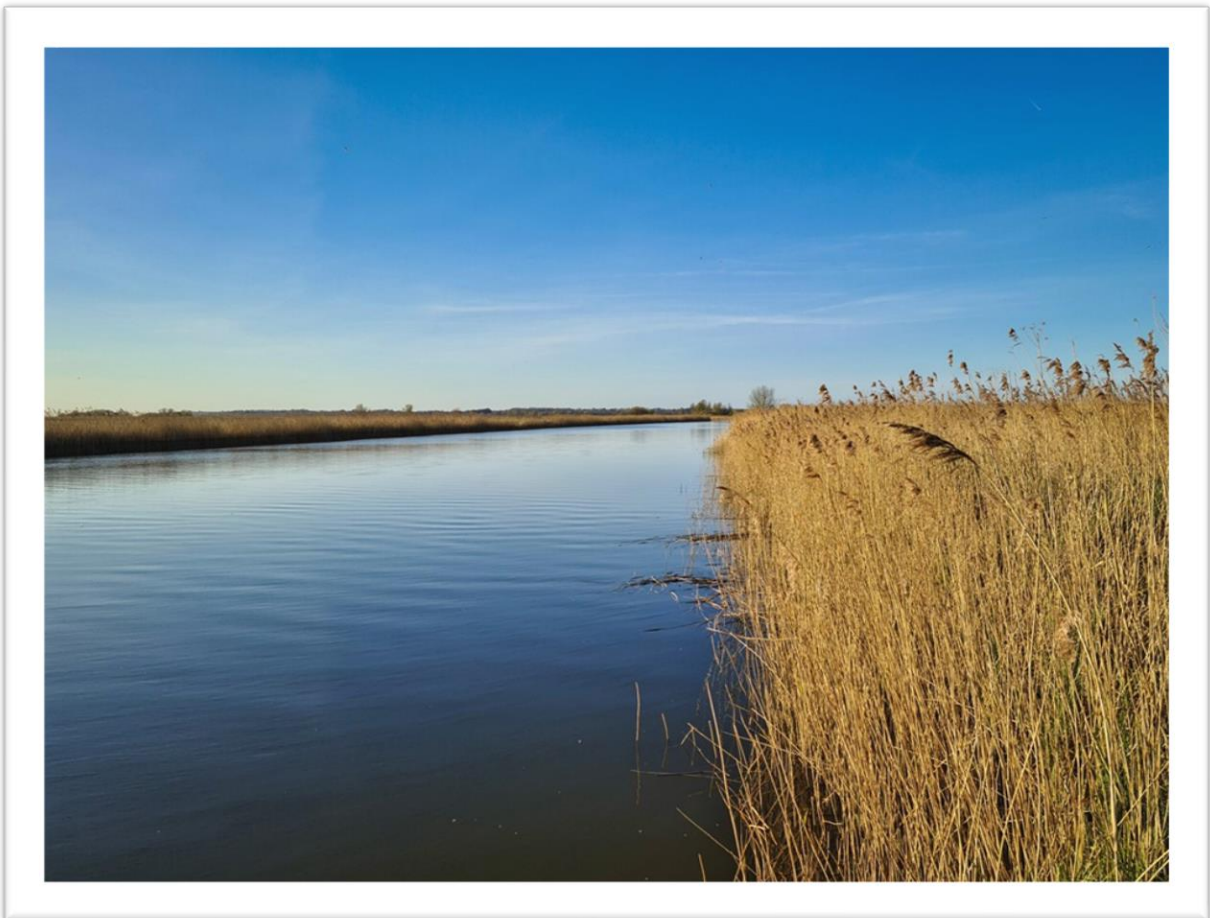
**Figure 2: Neighbourhood Plan Process**



## Consultation with Residents

19. The Oulton Neighbourhood Plan has been developed by residents and parish councillors on behalf of the wider community. A working group, comprising a mix of residents and parish councillors, has overseen the process throughout on behalf of the Parish Council as the 'qualifying body'. Engaging the wider community in the Neighbourhood Plan's development has been a key focus for the working group.
20. A major consultation exercise ran for eight weeks from 12/12/20 to 8/2/21 and included a survey with 19 questions. There was a separate business questionnaire which accompanied the survey for business owners in Oulton. A flyer was delivered to every resident and business in the parish, and it was advertised on the website, via posters and on social media. The survey was available online and in hardcopy from the working group. This enabled residents to provide their views on a wide range of issues and comment on policy options. The early engagement helped the working group to formulate this Regulation 14 pre-submission draft.
21. The main issues and matters raised included:
  - Traffic is a concern, particularly the speed of traffic.
  - There is strong support for protecting and improving wildlife habitat. Many local green space suggestions were made alongside key views.
  - Design is considered important and there is a good level of support for incorporating high environmental standards into new buildings.

- Providing housing for families, starter homes and lifetime homes is considered most important.
  - Residents feel that small – medium sized homes of 2 or 3 bedrooms are most in need.
  - There is strong support for improving walking and cycling links, especially to improve access to local services, and improve associated infrastructure such as benches and cycle racks.
22. More detail on consultation activities is provided in the Consultation Statement which accompanies this Neighbourhood Plan.



*View of Oulton Dyke*



## Vision and Objectives

## Vision

The special identity of Oulton, nestled as it is alongside the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads but on the edge of Lowestoft, will be protected and enhanced. The rural character is defined by many features, but especially habitats and green infrastructure for wildlife such as the marshes and broads, the openness of the landscape, historic buildings, and the tranquillity of the parish. Oulton's setting is important to the people who live there.

In protecting and enhancing this character, the plan will result in a more coherent, connected and expansive ecological network of key habitats that delivers a significant net ecological gain for wildlife over the plan period. The plan will ensure that the openness of the landscape is retained for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike, adding as it does to the tranquillity and peace that residents so enjoy, and that the parish's historic and heritage assets continue to provide a sense of place.

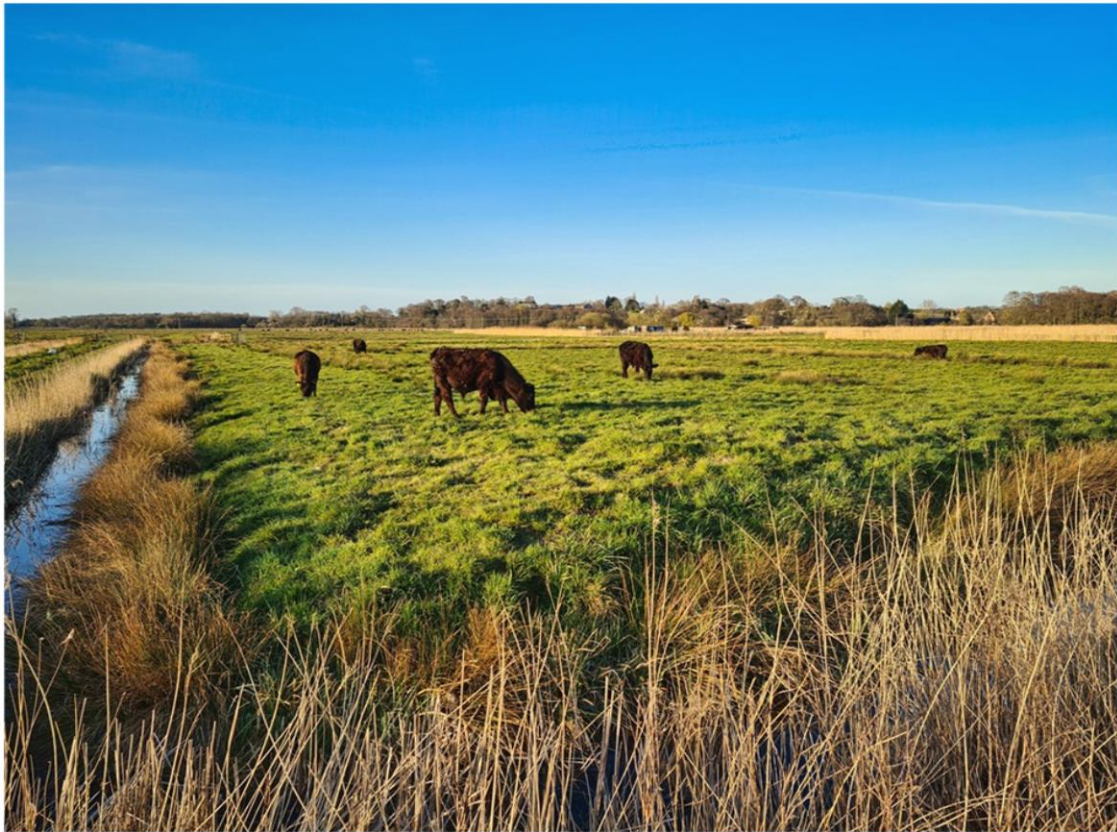
Where possible, the plan will help to address the negative impact that traffic flows and speeds have and improve access to local services and facilities by walking and cycling. Underpinning life in Oulton is the community spirit, and the plan will build on this, helping people to stay in the parish, and creating opportunities for people to meet, interact, and get to know each other.

Finally, the plan will make a key contribution towards addressing climate change, both through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and overseeing a radical change in the development of a network of trees and hedgerows to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>.

## Objectives

- A. Ensure the natural environment is a key consideration in all decisions about how Oulton changes;
- B. Conserve and enhance Oulton's ecological network;
- C. Ensure any future housing development meets the needs of residents of the parish;
- D. Ensure future development blends well with the existing built environment;
- E. Promote sensitive development that protects and enriches the landscape of the parish, safeguarding key views;
- F. Respond to climate change, promoting sustainable development and energy efficiency;
- G. The integrity, character and appearance of the historic environment of the parish will be conserved and where possible enhanced;
- H. Protect important green spaces;
- I. Promote access to the countryside for recreation and enjoyment;
- J. Reduce the impact of traffic; and
- K. Support community spirit by improving connections to local services and facilities, especially by making walking and cycling safer.

23. Although the neighbourhood plan does not have a specific policy on climate change, it has been woven into many of the policies. For example:
- Policy 3 supports new homes that are designed to high standards of energy efficiency. This will reduce energy consumption which should reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions;
  - Policies 3, 4, 5 and 6 promote the protection of the natural environmental and natural features such as trees, as well as the planting of new trees, hedges and habitats. Increased vegetation should not only have a cooling effect on air temperature, but will absorb CO<sup>2</sup> emissions; and
  - Policy 9 encourages the use of sustainable transport such as walking. This should reduce some car journeys which in turn will reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. Community Action 1 encourages electric vehicle use.



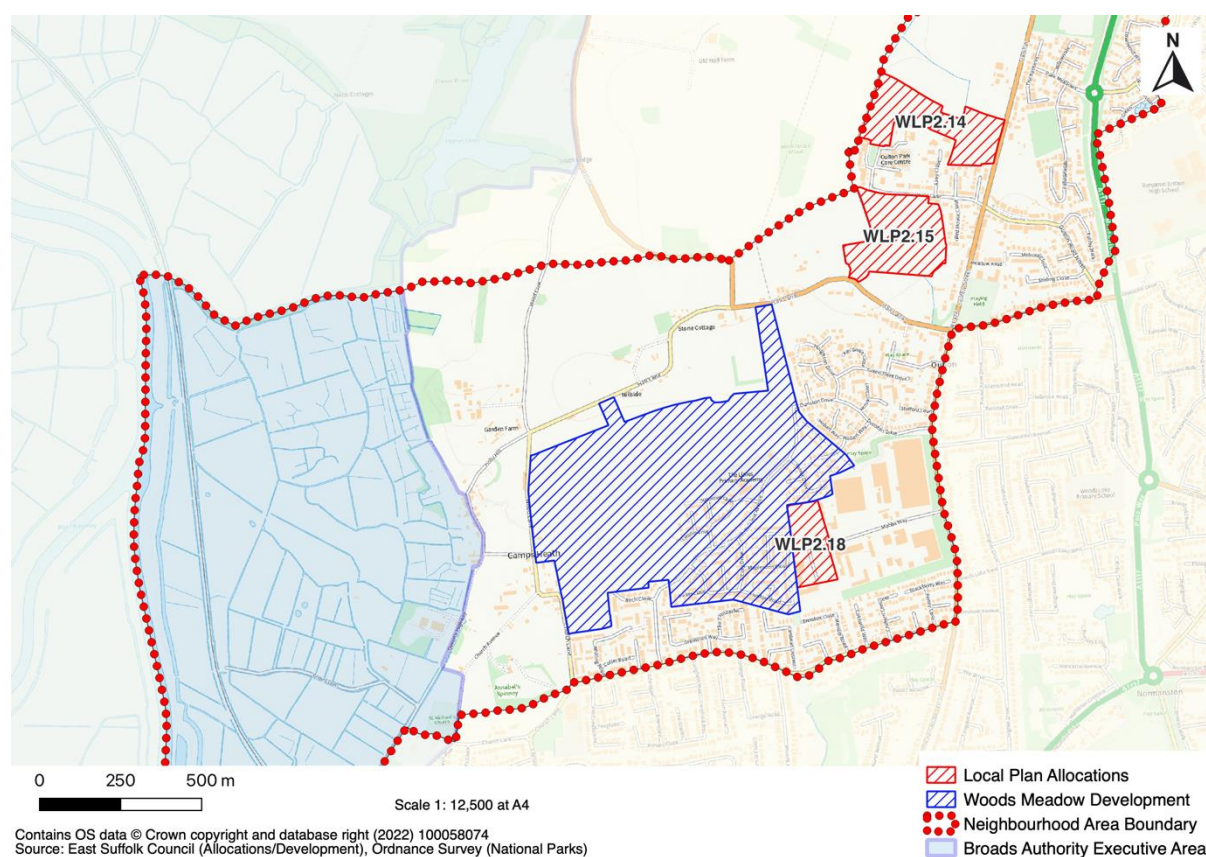
*View of Gravel Dam, towards Camps Heath, Oulton*

**This section on Housing and Design and the policies it contains aims to deliver the following neighbourhood plan objectives for Oulton:**

- *Objective A: Ensure the natural environment is a key consideration in all decisions about how Oulton changes;*
- *Objective C: Ensure any future housing development meets the needs of residents of the parish;*
- *Objective D: Ensure future development blends well with the existing built environment;*
- *Objective F: Respond to climate change, promoting sustainable development and energy efficiency.*

- Oulton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-36 9

**Figure 3: Local Plan Allocations and Woods Meadow Development**



## Housing Type and Mix

27. The National Planning Policy Framework requires plans to have policies that meet the housing needs of different demographic groups, such as older people, disabled people, self-builders, families etc.
28. Consultations found that it is important that new housing meets a local need in terms of the type and mix of houses provided, not least so that local people are able to stay in the parish rather than having to move away, and this is seen as important in retaining the special community spirit of the parish.
29. The population grew slightly between 2001 and 2011, with this almost entirely in the older age categories. It might also indicate a need for homes suitable for people as they age. Consultations with the community seem to recognise this, with more bungalows being popular. It is also recognised by the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan (Policy WLP8.31 – Lifetime Design) which requires 40% of new dwellings to be designed to be adaptable to people’s needs as they age. The Local Plan for the Broads requires 20% of dwellings to be built to meet Building Regulation Standard M4(2) on developments of 5 or more dwellings. This requires the dwelling to meet the needs of occupants with differing needs, including some older or disabled people, and allow adaptation of the dwelling to meet the changing needs of occupants over time. **Policy 1** seeks to align with this and provide support in particular for bungalows.



30. The ageing population may also indicate a need for more smaller unit housing within the parish, to cater for people wanting to downsize in the future. Just over a quarter of homes are single occupancy with around two thirds of these being older people. It could be that younger people are leaving the community because they cannot afford the housing to stay, which would suggest a need for housing suitable for younger people, which could be affordable housing or rental or smaller dwellings.
31. Looking at the type of housing available, it is dominated by detached homes which make up just over half of houses in the parish. In terms of dwelling size, although there is a fairly average number of 1-bedroom homes, the proportion of 2-bedroom is below average, whilst the proportion of 3 and 4 bedroomed homes is quite high. This means there may be a shortage of smaller properties for older people to downsize into or people just starting out on the housing ladder to buy.
32. When asked about preferences for new homes the community indicated a slight preference towards a mix of housing, especially two but also three bedroomed homes, and to a lesser extent four bedroomed. Especially keen to have housing for families or people trying to get on the housing ladder.
33. Oulton is popular with families, and this means it has quite a high percentage of younger people 15 years of age or less, who will eventually need to move onto having their own homes. Between 2001 and 2011 there was a significant increase in non-dependent children living at home, indicating that they cannot afford to move.
34. The Housing Needs Assessment found that three bedroomed homes are the most common and they will remain the greatest need going forward (see **Figure 4**). However, the data from the Housing Needs Assessment shows that there is an increasing need for 2 bedroomed homes compared to 2011: the proportion increasing from 22% up to 28%. This ties in with the finding that Oulton has a lower proportion of 2 bedroomed homes compared to Waveney and England, which is 28%. This suggests that a policy intervention is needed to boost the proportion of 2 bedroomed homes towards 28% as the need isn't being met without a policy steer.

**Figure 4: Proportion of homes of different sizes (%)**

Number of Bedrooms	Actual (2011 Census)	Forecast (To 2036)
1 bed	9.9	9.2
2 bed	22.3	28.5
3 bed	49.4	45.8
4 bed	16.0	13.0
5 bed	2.3	3.5

Source: AECOM, Housing Needs Assessment 2021

35. East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.1 says that the mix of sizes and types of units on any particular site should be based on evidence of local needs. It also says that 35% of new dwellings are expected to be 1- or 2-bedroom properties but that Neighbourhood Plans can set out a more detailed approach to housing type and mix which reflects local circumstances and is supported by evidence, and a slightly modified approach seems to be required for Oulton. Examples are shown in **Figure 5**.

**Figure 5: Requirement for Small Homes**

Size of Development	Minimum requirement for small homes (2 bedrooms)
10 dwellings	3
11-13 dwellings	4
14-16 dwellings	5

36. Although a mix of housing as set out in **Policy 1** will be expected, it is recognised that with building conversions it might not always be possible.
37. **Policy 1** intends to ensure appropriate levels of smaller dwellings are delivered where landowners/developers own large sites within the parish but choose to divide these up in such a way that the threshold is are not met.

#### **Policy 1: Housing Type and Mix**

All housing proposals will need to provide a mix of housing types and sizes, and these should aim to reflect local housing need using the best available and proportionate evidence.

All housing proposals for 10 or more dwellings must include a minimum of 30% of dwellings comprising two bedrooms, rounded up to the nearest whole figure unless evidence is provided showing that:

- a) A lower need is justified through a more recent Housing Needs Assessment for Oulton; or
- b) The scheme is made unviable.

These requirements apply to the whole proposal, with the expectation that an even distribution is made across market and Affordable housing.

The provision of single-storey dwellings will be considered a significant benefit, and/or dwellings that are built to adaptable and accessible M4(2) standards, in order to meet the needs of an ageing population.

### **Affordable housing**

38. Looking at affordability, the proportion of rented accommodation is slightly lower than average, but there is a good level of social-rented properties within the parish, which may be more affordable to those with low incomes.
39. The Housing Needs Assessment identified an affordability gap, looking at household income and house prices. This indicates a need for affordable housing. The sites allocated for residential development, plus Woods Meadows, should deliver a significant amount of affordable housing in Oulton. Policy WLP8.2 requires 20% of new homes for major planning applications to be affordable housing. If this is applied in



Oulton, it more than satisfies the estimated local need set out in the Housing Needs Assessment. This suggests that the Neighbourhood Plan does not need a separate policy on providing more affordable homes.

40. Affordable housing is housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:
41. **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
42. **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
43. **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.
44. **First Homes:** The government has set a minimum discount of 30 per cent for First Homes, with this being locked-in for all future first time buyers. The government has also confirmed that 25 per cent of the affordable homes that each housing scheme, with certain exceptions, provide through section 106 development contributions will need to be First Homes.
45. Looking at the type of affordable housing, Policy WLP8.2 – Affordable Housing – in the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan requires 50% as affordable rent, there is flexibility over the other 50%. East Suffolk Council is preparing an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document which it is aiming to publish in 2022, which is also relevant to the Broads<sup>3</sup>. The Housing Needs Assessment for Oulton suggests a 50/50

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/supplementary-planning-documents/>

split between affordable rent and routes to home ownership is appropriate for the parish. However, the evidence also suggests a need to help people get on the housing ladder, especially younger residents. The Neighbourhood Plan will require an alternative mix suggested by the Housing Needs Assessment, as shown in Policy 2 below.

46. This aligns with the direction of proposed national policy, which includes a mandated minimum level of delivery of the Government's new First Homes affordable home ownership product.
47. The District Council or Broads Authority will ensure that any planning permission granted for affordable housing schemes is subject to appropriate conditions and/or planning obligations to secure its affordability in perpetuity (for the life of the property), whilst recognising the national Right to Buy scheme. Within the Broads Authority Executive Area, Policy DM34 of the Broads Local Plan requires development of 6-9 dwellings to contribute a commuted sum (off-site contribution) towards the provision of affordable housing.

#### **Policy 2: Affordable housing tenure mix**

Affordable housing provided should meet the following mix of tenure types as determined by the most recent Housing Needs Assessment for Oulton:

- a) 50% affordable rent
- b) 25% First Homes
- c) 15% shared ownership
- d) 10% rent to buy

## **Design**

48. Design is another key area where the Neighbourhood Plan can have influence. The Government is raising the importance of good design with the development of national design guides, and encourages neighbourhood plans to have design policies. Design, however, is more than just what the actual building looks like.: It also relates to layout, density and how it incorporates habitat features and landscaping, amongst other considerations. The augmenting of ecological networks is a key feature of the plan, and all development will be expected to contribute to this.
49. In earlier consultations with the community, there was strong support for ensuring high quality design of new developments, alongside high environmental standards. Electric charging points was also popular. Design is considered important and there is a good level of support for incorporating high environmental standards into new buildings. Also support for contemporary design to achieve high environmental standards. Strong support from residents for inclusion of local design guides for new homes to help reflect local character.
50. East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.28 – Sustainable Construction – requires high environmental standards and sets out examples of how this can be achieved, but

without specifying what that standard could be. A Sustainable Construction supplementary planning document was adopted on 5 April 2022 to help guide the implementation of this policy<sup>4</sup>. It is also an opportunity for the Neighbourhood Plan, to be specific as to how to drive-up standards.

51. The East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.29: Design sets out general principles for good design, but also allows neighbourhood plans to set their own criteria. Policy DM43: Design in the Local Plan for the Broads expects high quality design that considers a range of factors, and DM14: Energy Demand and Performance promotes design that is energy efficient. East Suffolk Council has also adopted a Residential Development Brief for the allocated site at Land North of Union Lane, Oulton (Policy WLP2.14 of the Waveney Local Plan). This has the status of a supplementary planning document and so will need to be reflected in any design for that allocation.
52. **Policy 3** is supported by Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines and Codes (February 2021), produced by AECOM. This sets out the general design principles for Oulton as well as more specific design codes for particular character areas. When developing proposals, it is expected that they will be informed and influenced by the Design Guidelines and Codes, in addition to being compliant with **Policy 3** itself.



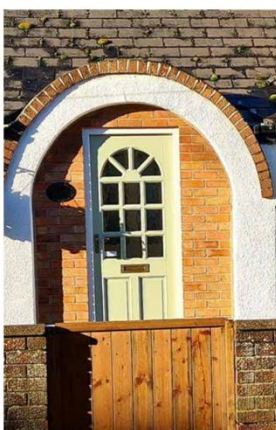
The local vernacular rendering is recommended to be pink and light cream



Brickwork



Timber boarding



Arched porch



Tile hung dormer



Combining materials - brick and cladding boarding



Brick quoins



Landscaping



Combining materials - sandstone brick and flint

*The local vernacular, taken from the Oulton Design Guidelines & Codes, AECOM 2021*

53. The National Planning Policy Framework requires a positive approach to be taken to promoting energy efficiency. In December 2021, the Government announced that

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/supplementary-planning-documents/>

from June 2022, the Building Regulations will be changed so that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from new build homes must be around 30% lower than current standards and emissions from other new buildings, including offices and shops, must be reduced by 27%<sup>5</sup>. It is not possible for neighbourhood plans to set additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings; instead, these must be contained in local plans. East Suffolk Council has adopted a Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document, and this adds detail to part f of Policy 3. Investment in energy efficiency in new development will have the significant additional benefits of reducing energy costs for the users of new development, as well as carbon savings, and so will apply to apartments as well.

54. Electric vehicle charging points should be provided in line with national technical standards if available, or one per residential parking space as a minimum. This can be either on the plot for off-road parking, or at on-street charging points if the formal parking is provided on-street. In December 2021, the Government announced that new homes and buildings such as supermarkets and workplaces, as well as those undergoing major renovation, will be required to install electric vehicle charge points from 2022. When this is incorporated into Building Regulations, that aspect of **Policy 3** could be superseded. Residential parking must adhere to the standards set out in the Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2019, or any successor documents.
55. Design can be a very broad concept. There are a number of other policies in the neighbourhood plan that will influence design, such as the need to avoid undue harm to the Important views (**Policy 6**).
56. The design of new development is important throughout Oulton. However, the Oulton Design Guidelines and Codes does not cover the Broads Authority area, which means that **Policy 3** substantially applies to development within the East Suffolk area. Nonetheless, the principles of the policy and the checklist area also applicable to the Broads and can be used alongside guides provided by the Broads Authority.
57. **Appendix B** provides a checklist of design considerations which should be submitted alongside applications. The completed checklist will explain how each of the design requirements have been incorporated and inform the planning authority of the thinking behind the proposal. A proportionate approach can be taken to completing this. Applicants should also have due regard to national design guidance and codes and design policy in the local plans for East Suffolk Waveney and the Broads.
58. Criteria f of **Policy 3** relates to sustainability, including sustainable drainage. Development within the Internal Drainage District of the Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Internal Drainage Board should seek any required consent prior to determination of any planning application.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-homes-to-produce-nearly-a-third-less-carbon?utm\\_source=LPA+contacts&utm\\_campaign=ac322dac49-Architects+bulletin+30042019\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_2d38e875a2-ac322dac49-8820022](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-homes-to-produce-nearly-a-third-less-carbon?utm_source=LPA+contacts&utm_campaign=ac322dac49-Architects+bulletin+30042019_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_2d38e875a2-ac322dac49-8820022)

### Policy 3: Design

All new development within Oulton must demonstrate high-quality design and promote a good 'sense of place'. Any new development in the Broads area must be designed to the highest standard which is fitting with the areas equivalence of National Park status.

The design principles, taken from Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines and Codes (2021) should be followed and proposals must submit a completed version of the checklist in **Appendix B**. The Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines and Codes (2021) does not apply to development in the Broads Authority Executive Area.

**a. Make the urban structure work for everyone**

Proposals must be of an appropriate density, height, orientation, variety, scale and layout, with an appropriate use of boundaries to provide enclosure and define streets. Existing and new neighbourhoods should be linked rather than segregated.

**b. Promote local character**

Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve, complement or enhance the character and quality of its immediate area and the wider parish will not be acceptable.

The use of materials that are prevalent in the parish, such as flint, brickwork, timber boarding, and render, will be supported, especially mixing materials on building facades. Buildings of innovative and contemporary design will also be welcomed, as long as their scale, materials and design complement the predominant building characteristics and enhance their surroundings. The tenure of homes should not be revealed through the external appearance including architecture, landscape, access, car parking, waste storage or other design features.

**c. Provide or preserve a connected street layout**

Streets should be considered as public space for people, and not just a way of enabling vehicles to move around. The needs of people walking or cycling, as well as children and wheelchair users, will be prioritised (see also **Policy 9 on Sustainable Transport**). A layout of well-connected streets helps achieve a sustainable, walkable and secure neighbourhood. Larger developments will need to avoid dominance of cul-de-sacs.

**d. Treat vehicle parking as a place-making exercise**

Vehicle parking should not dominate the street-scene, with the visual impact being minimised and spaces integrated with landscaping. A proportion of parking should be provided on-street within any new developments, but this should be well designed, located and integrated into the scheme to avoid obstruction to all highway users or impede visibility.

**e. Improve landscape and access to the countryside**



Open spaces will be an important part of the landscape and street scape (see also **Policy 5 on Local Green spaces**), should be accessible and within walking distance, and be connected to each other (see also **Policy 4 on Green Corridors**). New development should be well integrated into the landscape and, where relevant, maintain the quality of transition between the village and agricultural landscape as well as protect the landscape setting of the Broads (see **Policy 7**). Proposals will also need to fully incorporate landscaping and natural features such as trees, both those that are retained and those introduced, where the opportunity exists to help to deliver or complement the ecological network (see also **Policy 4**). The expectation is that new streets will be tree lined. Boundaries will be expected to have 'soft' treatments, comprising of hedges and/ or trees rather than hard boundaries such as close boarded fencing, unless this significantly conflicts with local character.

**f. Design for sustainability**

Designs that incorporate low carbon infrastructure (e.g., Ground source heat network or solar PV with battery storage) and high standards of design and construction, such as zero, or at least, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions standards that exceed the requirements of Building Regulations will be supported and considered a significant benefit. Homes built to an even higher energy efficiency standard will be considered as delivering a significant benefit. Electric car charging points will be expected to be provided as part of all new development, at least one per formal parking space.

Development that includes water management and sustainable drainage features contributing to flood risk management, water resource conservation and biodiversity should be a standard design requirement. Features would include rainwater harvesting/recycling and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) giving environmental, recreational and biodiversity benefits.

**g. Character Areas**

Proposals falling within one, or more, of the five character-areas set out in the Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidelines and Codes (2021), will be expected to have full regard to the relevant design codes for that area. The Design Guidelines and Codes do not apply in the Broads Authority Executive Area.





Figure 13: Blue Boar Inn located along Oulton Street.



Figure 15: The Village sign is situated close to the Somerleyton Road/ Gorleston Road roundabout, on the corner of the community field. It was erected in 1990 and designed by the Parish Council. The sign symbolises the varied history of the parish and at the top of it there is a 3 dimensional model of St. Michael's Church.



Figure 14: St Michael's Church located along Church Avenue.



Figure 16: Parkhill Hotel, elegant country house hotel, located north of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

*Special local buildings, taken from Oulton Design Guidelines & Codes, AECOM 2021*

**This section on the Natural Environment and the policies it contains aims to deliver the following neighbourhood plan objectives for Oulton:**

Objective A: *Ensure the natural environment is a key consideration in all decisions about how Oulton changes;*

Objective B: *Conserve and enhance Oulton's ecological network;*

Objective E: *Promote sensitive development that protects and enriches the landscape of the parish, safeguarding key views;*

Objective F: *Respond to climate change, promoting sustainable development and energy efficiency;*

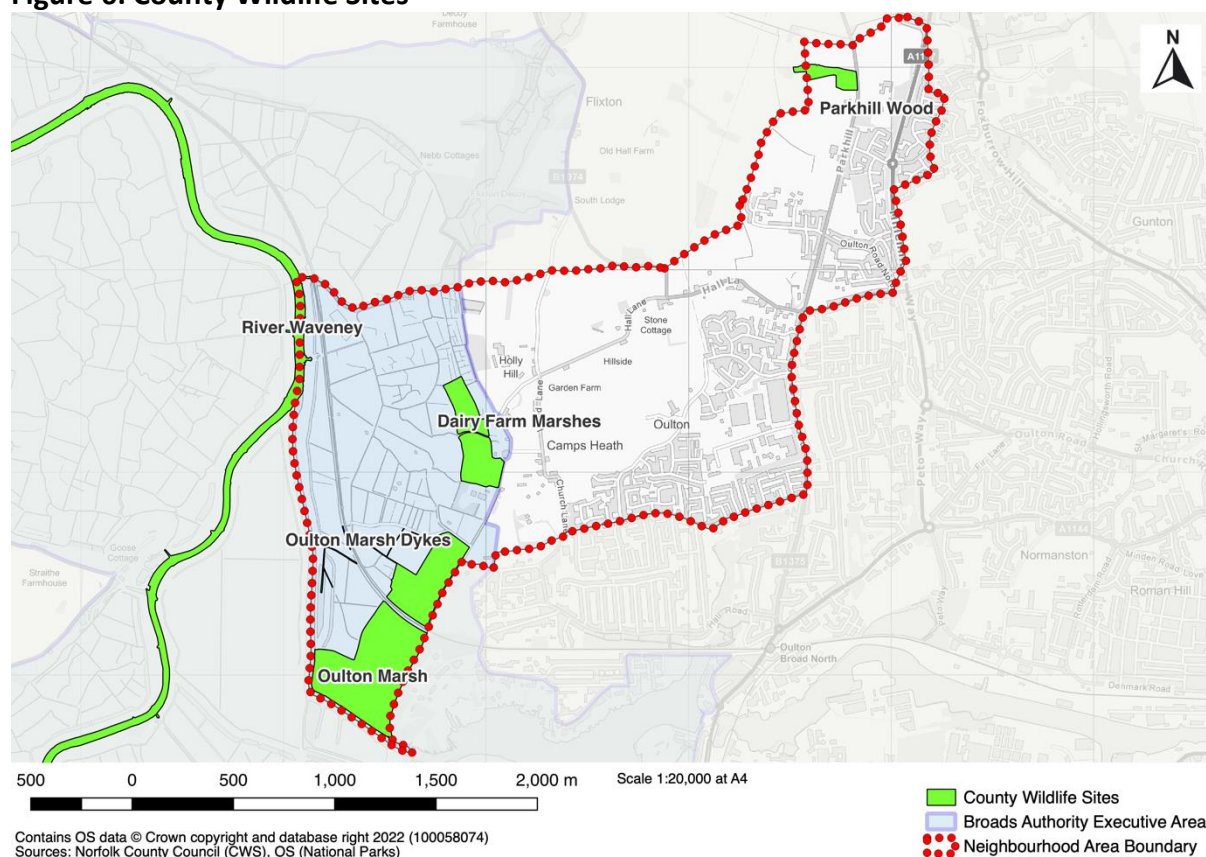
Objective H: *Protect important green spaces;*

Objective I: *Promote access to the countryside for recreation and enjoyment.*

- Oulton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-36 20

areas and walks have already been established and the park is a great place for walkers, joggers, horse riders, picnics and fruit picking.

**Figure 6: County Wildlife Sites**



63. Legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework (Chapter 15) affords considerable support for protecting and enhancing key landscapes and areas of value in terms of biodiversity. This includes the need for biodiversity net gains in developments, including through green infrastructure networks. The National Planning Policy Framework supports the mapping of ecological assets and networks, including for enhancement and creation. Furthermore, it covers the protection of existing green open spaces and creation of new ones. Linked to this is the introduction of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which will establish priorities and map proposals for specific actions to drive nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.
64. The Environment Act (2021) requires all development schemes to deliver a mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) to be maintained for a period of at least 30 years. The concept seeks measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Development proposals must 'leave biodiversity in a better state than before'. This will become law mid-2023, with secondary legislation and detail yet to come. There will be three ways to deliver BNG, onsite within the red line, off site locally with biodiversity enhanced in conjunction with nearby landowners, or through statutory credits. The requirement for BNG is in addition to following the usual mitigation hierarchy to avoid, mitigate or compensate for biodiversity losses. Some developers are already designing net gain into their



development projects and as set out above, the National Planning Policy Framework encourages the net gain approach, though the requirement to measure this or meet a particular level of BNG is not yet mandatory nationally or within the East Suffolk Council and Broads Authority area.

65. Policy WLP8.34 of the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan, and Policies SP6 and DM13 of the Broads Local Plan reflect the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including ecological gains and creating improved networks. Proposals are not supported where they directly or indirectly impact on locally recognised sites, including County Wildlife Sites, Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, unless new opportunities to enhance green infrastructure can be provided to mitigate or compensate for the loss. Any compensatory habitat is required to be equal or greater in size.

## Biodiversity and Green Corridors

66. As part of developing the Neighbourhood Plan for Oulton, Green Corridors<sup>6</sup> have been identified to connect areas of wildlife habitat across the parish. Each Green Corridor will be a focus for landowners and community groups to increase biodiversity and connectivity, for example, by planting more trees and hedges, by allowing grassland areas to grow wilder, and by installing features like bird and bat boxes. These will also be a potential target for BNG where developers need to deliver improvement offsite.
67. The Green Corridors in **Figure 7** and shown on the **Policies Map in Appendix A** have been identified according to the following principles:
- The location of sites which are designated for their wildlife importance, including Dairy Farm Marshes County Wildlife Site (CWS), Oulton Marsh CWS, and Park Hill Wood CWS
  - Between these designated sites, to enable high quality core habitats to be connected by corridors of habitat;
  - In other locations where existing Priority Habitats or habitats such as woodland and hedges can be connected and augmented; and
  - Areas identified as National Habitat Enhancement Zone 2, where opportunities to support habitat creation and enhance ecological corridors should be explored<sup>7</sup>.
68. The Green Corridors link the key blocks of habitat in the Oulton area, identifying where there is likely to be best opportunity for improving ecological connectivity. Further work to determine the condition of existing habitat and engagement with the local community and landowners to identify the exact location and nature of improvements will take place over the course of the Neighbourhood Plan and beyond. In this respect the mapped corridors are indicative, as it may be that the best opportunities to improve or create habitat arise adjacent or just outside of the corridors. These

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<sup>6</sup> A Green Corridor is sometimes referred to as an Ecological Corridor or Network, a Wildlife Corridor, or a Green Infrastructure Corridor. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#green-infrastructure>.

<sup>7</sup> Identified by Natural England

corridors are hugely important to Oulton's residents. Their inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan was supported by 95% of respondents to a survey.

69. Green Corridors benefit wildlife and people. Mammal species such as hedgehogs and bats, many species of birds including barn owls and yellow-hammers, and numerous insect and plant species require continuous habitat features to thrive. Many wildlife species have reduced in abundance because of habitat destruction and fragmentation, and Green Corridors will go some way to reduce this trend in Oulton.
70. In addition to wildlife benefits, green corridors can be combined with other uses such as footpaths, which means there would also be benefits for residents and visitors in Oulton. Spending time close to nature is good for mental and physical wellbeing, and these Green Corridors would increase the opportunity for people to do this, either through recreation on publicly accessible land or through assisting with conservation activities. There is also evidence that Green Corridors can mitigate flooding by intercepting and slowing run-off in high rainfall events<sup>8</sup>. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can be used to provide multiple additional benefits as well as water management, such as wildlife, biodiversity and recreation.

#### **Policy 4: Biodiversity and Green Corridors**

New development proposals must recognise the identified Green Corridors (see **Figure 7** and the **Policies Map in Appendix A**) and address the following matters:

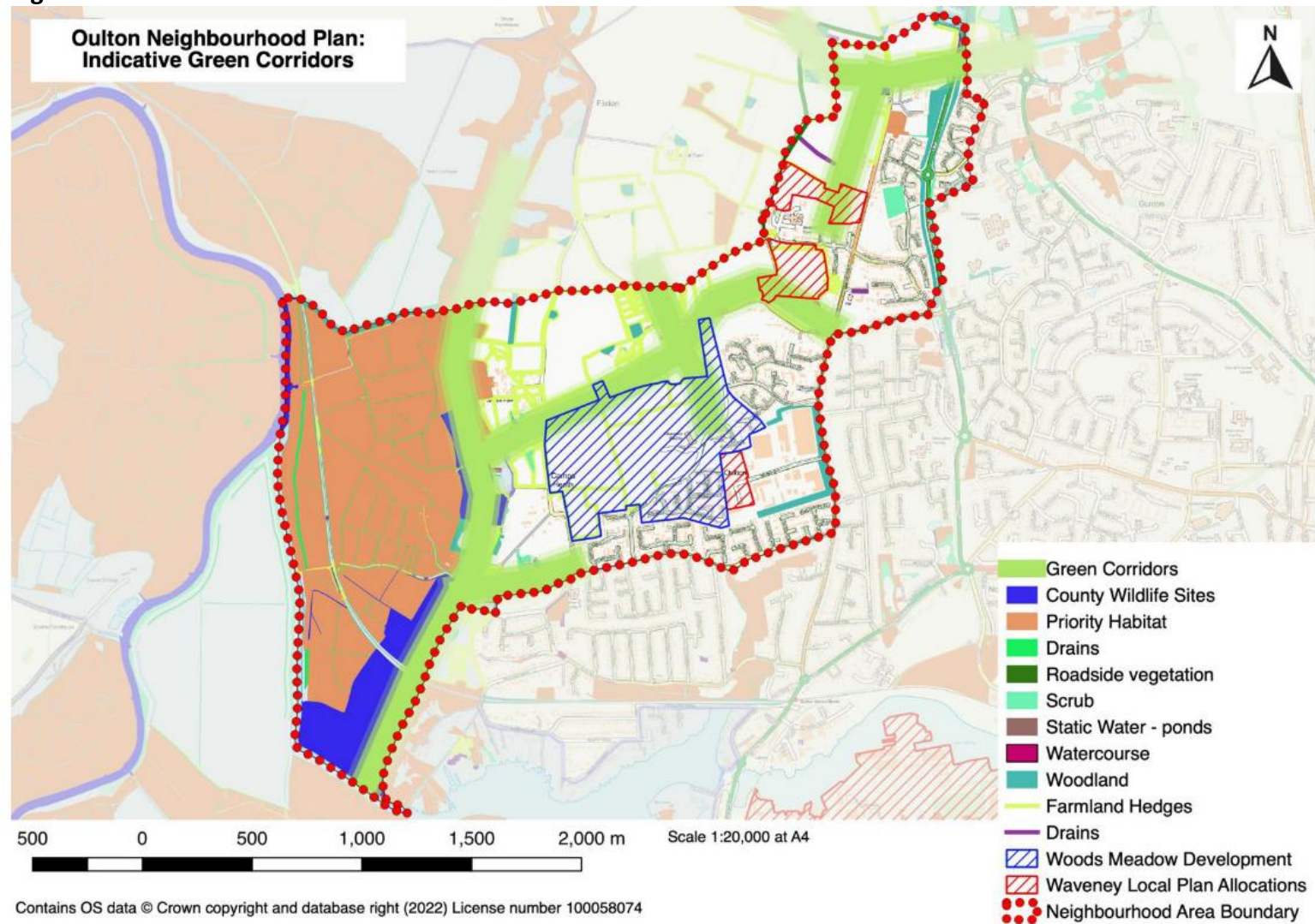
- a) Development within the indicative extent of a Green Corridor must deliver measurable net gains in biodiversity which exceed national or local policy requirements or deliver qualitative improvement on site or to the corridor. This should relate to quality of habitat or its ability to facilitate movement of fauna.
- b) Proposals adjacent to the indicative extent of Green Corridors must maintain and where possible enhance the function of the corridor and demonstrate how they will mitigate any significant harm to the wildlife using it. Harm is likely to be caused by the introduction of barriers, such as housing, roads, hard landscaping and artificial lighting, the re-direction of water sources or water courses, or the insensitive management of habitats e.g., hedge cutting in the bird breeding season.
- c) Proposals that support improvement to the function of a Green Corridor will be looked upon positively.
- d) In the parish, if a development, following through the metric related to biodiversity net gain as required by the Environment Act 2021, needs to deliver the net gain off site, then the first preference will be to deliver this net gain in or adjacent to the indicative extent of the green corridors, working with local landowners.

Consideration will need to be given to the impact that allocated sites within the local plan have on the Green Corridors. Where possible the principles above should be followed.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/5037/norfolk-green-infrastructure-mapping-project-july\\_18\\_v4.pdf](https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/media/5037/norfolk-green-infrastructure-mapping-project-july_18_v4.pdf)

Figure 7: Oulton's Indicative Green Corridors





## Local Green Space

71. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that specific areas of land that are demonstrably special to the local community may be protected against development through designation as Local Green Space. These are often found within the built-up area and contribute to the character of a settlement. These can vary in size, shape, location, ownership and use, but such spaces will have some form of value to the community and help define what makes that specific settlement what it is.
72. The designation should only be used where:
- The green space is reasonably close to the community it serves;
  - The green area is demonstrably special to the community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of wildlife; and
  - The green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
73. A robust process has been followed to determine which green spaces within Oulton should be designated:
- a) Initial ideas were suggested by residents as part of consultation activities, with residents also asked to provide reasons as to why their ideas were special
  - b) These were reviewed to consider at a glance whether they would meet the national criteria for designation. Some suggestions such as highway verge or public footpaths were removed at this stage;
  - c) A site visit was undertaken by the working group and further evidence gathered on each of the remaining green spaces;
  - d) An assessment against the national criteria for Local Green Space was made for each of the potential areas;
  - e) Landowners were contacted to make them aware that their land was being considered for local green space designation and to invite them to make representations;
  - f) A final decision was made by the working group as to which green spaces to designate.
74. This Neighbourhood Plan designates 11 Local Green Spaces (LGS) for protection, these are identified in **Figure 8**, on the **Policies Map in Appendix A** and in individual maps in **Appendix C**. These are important not only for the wildlife they support, but provide significant quality of life benefits to residents, for example through encouraging recreation. Justification for each Local Green Space is found in **Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Space Assessment**.
75. The Local Green Space policy is important, as is the precise wording. Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belt. **Appendix D** provides justification for the specific wording in **Policy 5**.

### **Policy 5: Local Green Spaces**

The following areas are designated as Local Green Space for special protection:

1. Jenkin's Green and Pond
2. St Michael's Church and Churchyard
3. Community Centre Playing Field
4. Camps Heath Greenspace
5. Burial Grounds, near Union Lane
6. Brendon Way play area
7. Bloomsbury Close play area
8. Dunston Drive play area
9. Bowling Green, Camps Heath
10. Football Pitch, Camps Heath
11. Parkhill Woods County Wildlife Site

These will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with Green Belt Policy, except for the following deviations:

New buildings are inappropriate development, with the only exceptions to this:

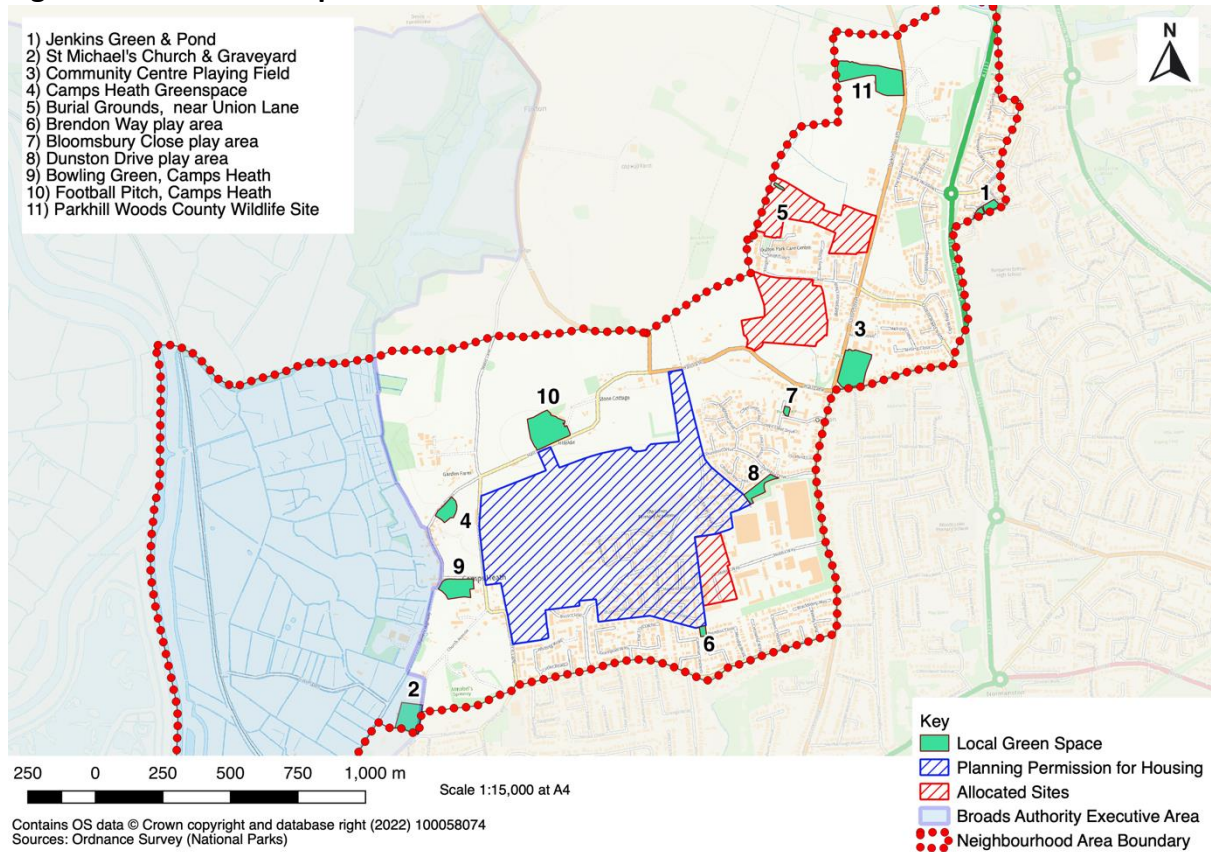
- a) Buildings for forestry or agriculture where the Local Green Space is used for commercial woodland or farmland;
- b) The provision of appropriate facilities in connection with the existing use of land where the facilities preserve the openness of the Local Green Space and do not conflict with the reasons for designation that make it special to the community, such as for recreation or ecology;
- c) The extension or alteration of a building if it does not impact on the openness or the reasons for designation that make Local Green Space special to the community; or
- d) The replacement of a building provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Other appropriate development includes:

- a) Engineering operations that are temporary, small-scale and result in full restoration;
- b) The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; or
- c) Material changes in the use of land where it would not undermine the reasons for designation that make it special to the community.

Proposals that are on land adjacent to Local Green Space are required to set out how any impacts on the special qualities of the green space, as identified by its reason for designation, will be mitigated.

**Figure10: Local Green Space**



## Important Views

76. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out at Paragraph 174 that, “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*”. There are some specific views and vistas within Oulton that are of particular importance to the local community. These were originally suggested by residents as part of the Issues and Options consultation in 2020. Each of these was assessed by the working group and evidence gathered to demonstrate their special qualities. This can be seen in the Views Assessment document that accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan.
77. Overall, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect ten public views for future enjoyment. The intention is not to stop development within these views, but to ensure that their distinct character is retained. Within the views afforded protection through **Policy 6** development that is overly intrusive or prominent will not be supported locally. Any proposals within these views will need to demonstrate that they are sited, designed and of a scale that does not significantly harm them.
78. Viewpoint 3 overlooks Oulton Country Park, part of the Woods Meadow development. The viewpoint does not hinder phase 2 of this development, unless plans change by encroaching onto the Country Park allocated land. As the Country Park grows, a 360-degree viewpoint from higher ground will show different fields, hay meadows, trees/hedges and wildlife. The Northern view will show the open beauty looking towards the proposed picnic area with horse paddocks surrounded by flowering hedges. The southern view from the open higher ground will look down towards the proposed play area with children enjoying themselves, tree lines, fields and wildlife.

### **Policy 6: Protection of Important Local Views**

The views identified in **Figure 11** and in the **Policies Map in Appendix A** and described in **Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Views Assessment Document** are important public local views in Oulton. Many of which depict the setting for the Broads.

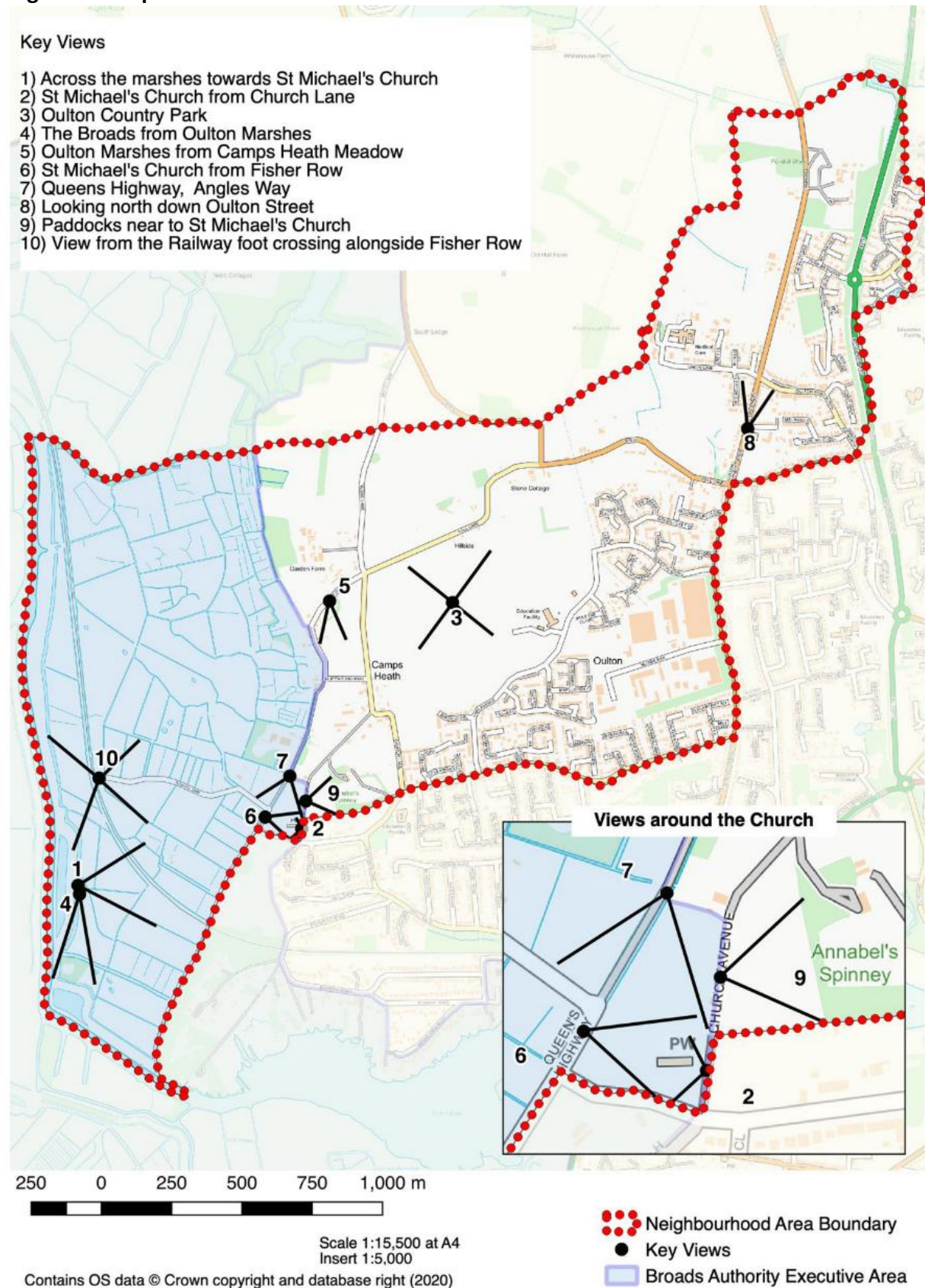
Development proposals that would adversely affect these key views will not be supported. Proposals are expected to demonstrate that they are sited and designed to be of a form and scale that avoids or mitigates any harm to the key views and setting of the Broads.





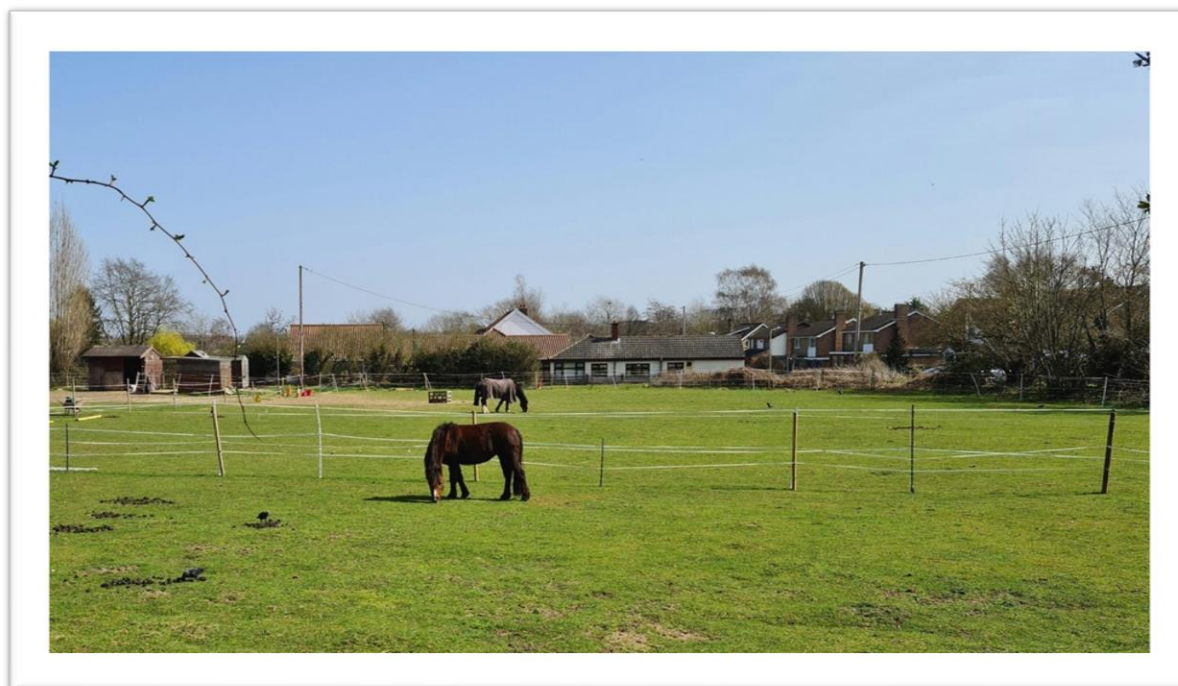
*View across the marshes towards St Michael's Church (View 1)*

**Figure 11: Important Local Views**





## The Paddocks Special Character Area



*Paddocks near to St Michael's Church*

79. There are a number of areas within the Parish that have a distinctive character and sense of place, but perhaps none more so than the array of paddocks around Camps Heath. These established areas have a mature quality and identity that sets them apart. The landscape around Camps Heath between the built-up area and the marshes is valued by the community (see **Figure 12** and the **Policies Map at Appendix A**).
80. Many areas of countryside are understandably valued and seen as important by local residents, but the paddocks both within and surrounding Camps Heath help make the area of significant importance. The area is unique in that it has a strong equestrian history situated on the edge of a significant nature reserve and marshland. The beauty of the local area is enhanced and complemented by the long established and well used grazing pastures used by horse owners and farmers alike. Camps Heath has a working livery and manage, along with numerous stables, paddocks and outbuildings. The quiet lanes and open paddocks, on the edge of the marshland, create a unique and special part of Oulton. The area has hills of green pastures giving unspoilt views of marsh and grazing land managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Such an unspoilt area of the parish needs to be protected in its own right as losing such a characteristic and historic part of Oulton would be a huge and unthinkable loss to the local area. **Figure 12** and the **Policies Map at Appendix A** shows these as a Special Character Area.
81. This area falls between two Landscape Setting Areas (8 and 9) in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Settlement Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Study<sup>9</sup>. Area 8, adjacent the Broads is considered to have a very low landscape capacity, which means there is very limited potential to accommodate any scale of new development. The area is

<sup>9</sup> [Settlement-Fringe-Landscape-Sensitivity-Study.pdf \(eastsuffolk.gov.uk\)](#)

identified as having historic continuity, retaining some significant historic features which contribute to its sense of place. It is also identified for its extensive equestrian land-use. Area 9, which runs parallel to the neighbourhood area boundary is identified to have high landscape capacity, meaning that large, medium and small-scale new development could potentially be accommodated. The assessment does state that the northern edge of this area (which falls within the Special Character Area) may be more sensitive than other parts of the setting area.

82. Unlike Conservation Areas, which feature groups or larger areas of buildings of architectural or historic importance, Special Character Areas rely less on the intrinsic value of individual buildings. Rather, they can be selected on account of their strong landscape elements or inherent and distinctive land usage and are important for their character and the contribution which they make to the local environment or setting; the paddocks are a highly distinctive feature of Camps Heath. The designation is therefore not just concerned with the landscape, it is how that landscape feels as a result of the use as paddocks.
83. **Figure 12** and the **Policies Map in Appendix A** defines the Paddocks Special Character Area and their location with respect to recent development and allocations in the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan. The Special Character Area is adjacent the Woods Meadow development, which includes the new Oulton Country Park.

#### **Policy 7: Paddocks Special Character Area**

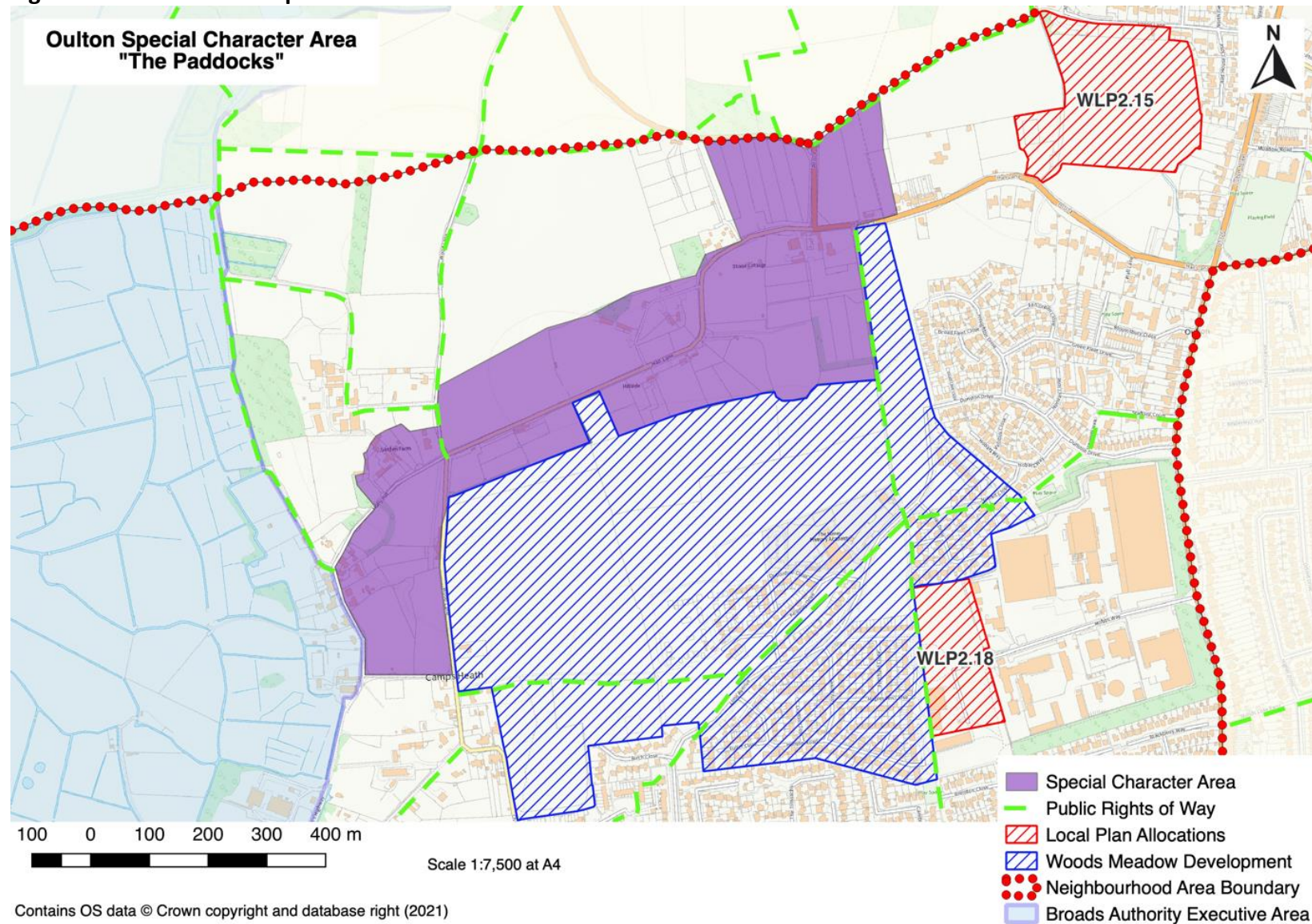
In the Paddocks Special Character Area, defined in **Figure 12** and on the **Policies Map at Appendix A**, development or redevelopment must respect those features or characteristics which are key to maintaining the special and distinctive quality of the area.

A proposal will not be supported where the harm caused to the special character as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefits that would be provided.

The Special Character Area is located adjacent to the Broads which has equivalent status of a National Park. Any development proposals must:

- a) Be of a scale and type so as not to impact on the character of the Broads; and
- b) Retain mature vegetation, where possible enhancing this with additional native planting; and
- c) Ensure boundary fencing (where used) is of an appropriate size and style.

Figure 12: The Paddocks Special Character Area





## Built and Historic Environment

**This section on the Built and Historic Environment and the policies it contains aims to deliver the following neighbourhood plan objective for Oulton:**

*Objective G: The integrity, character, and appearance of the historic environment of the parish will be conserved and where possible enhanced*

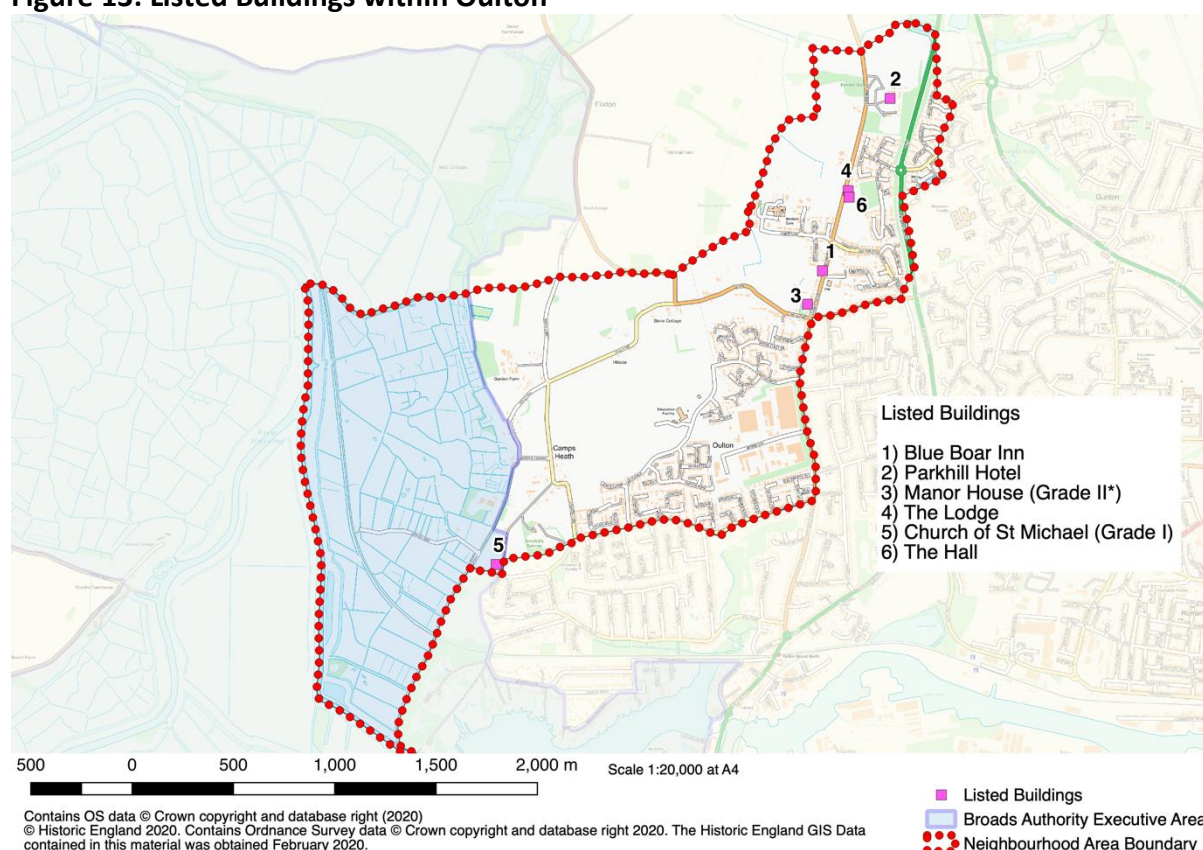
84. It is believed that the village of Oulton was originally clustered around St Michael's Church, approximately c1100. Later, it was moved to where it is today, and it has gradually evolved over the last two hundred years. Prior to this there were few buildings, and most villagers were engaged in agriculture. A manor, named Houghton, existed within the locality during the 13<sup>th</sup> - 15th centuries. Houghton means 'high' or 'hill' farm/enclosure/settlement. The name Oulton may have derived from Houghton. The present Manor House in the village is referred to as High House by local people<sup>10</sup>. The terrace houses on the eastern side of Oulton Street and in Oulton Road (north), built in the mid-late 1800s and early 1900s must have increased the population considerably. In 1971, the built-up area reached the form the village has today.
85. Over the years there have been a number of parish boundary changes. Up until 1904 the parish included Oulton Broad. Most recently, in 2018, the boundary with Lowestoft was amended. Additionally, Oulton is considered part of the Lowestoft area from an East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan perspective and the Lowestoft settlement boundary extends to cover the built-up area of Oulton parish.
86. Suffolk Heritage Explorer lists 69 historic assets within the parish, including archaeological finds dating back to prehistoric times. This includes Bronze Age and early Iron Age pottery and enclosure systems. In September 2020 excavation ahead of housing development at Woods Meadow revealed a nationally significant discovery, a large Anglo-Saxon cemetery, dating back to as early as the 6th century. Over 200 sets of remains were discovered, with some graves containing copper-alloy brooches, wrist clasps, strings of beads made of amber and glass, small iron knives and silver pennies. Excavation of such cemeteries in their entirety is rare in England. The site appears to represent a farming community buried over several generations with male, female, child and infant burials.
87. There is no designated conservation area, but the parish has 6 listed buildings, see **figure 13**, one of which, the Church of St Michael is Grade I listed which means it is of exceptional interest nationally. Only 1% of buildings fall into this category. St Michael's Church is somewhat distant from the village of Oulton, it stands on high ground overlooking marshlands to the west. Another building of significance is Manor House, which is a Grade II\* listed building, formerly known as High House. This is very late

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<sup>10</sup> Taken from a local website providing historical information about the parish:  
<https://awalkaroundoulton.weebly.com>

16<sup>th</sup> century, though altered considerably during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are no scheduled monuments or buildings at risk within the parish.

**Figure 13: Listed Buildings within Oulton**



88. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance recognises that there are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas local authorities keep a local list of non-designated heritage assets, incorporating those identified by neighbourhood planning bodies. The National Planning Policy Framework determines that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application.
89. The East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.37 sets out that proposals should seek to conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings and Policy SP5 (Historic Environment) and Policy DM11 of the Broads Local Plan both cover heritage assets. WLP8.38 specifically covers Non-Designated Heritage Assets, this sets out that Neighbourhood Plans can identify other buildings and assets of historic or local significance, subject to meeting an agreed criteria, as set out in **Figure 14**. Historic England's Local Heritage Listing Advice Note<sup>11</sup> was also reviewed and useful in identifying and assessing heritage assets.

<sup>11</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag301-local-heritage-listing/>

**Figure 14: East Suffolk Local Listing Criteria**

Archaeological Interest	Architectural Interest	Artistic Interest	Historic Interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recorded in the Suffolk County Historic Environment Record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aesthetic value</li> <li>Known architect</li> <li>Integrity</li> <li>Landmark status</li> <li>Group value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artistic value</li> <li>Known designer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association</li> <li>Rarity</li> <li>Representativeness</li> <li>Social and communal value</li> </ul>

90. A comprehensive review by the working group of designated heritage assets and the Historic Environment Record<sup>12</sup> was undertaken prior to considering whether there were other assets of heritage value worth identifying in the Neighbourhood Plan. Residents were asked for their suggestions in relation to this as part of the first community consultation, and overall 10 suggestions were put forward of heritage assets worthy of inclusion. Further evidence on these was collated by the working group and an assessment undertaken against East Suffolk's listing criteria.
91. The following assets are identified in Oulton Neighbourhood Plan as non-designated heritage assets, as shown on **Figure 15** and on the **Policies Map at Appendix A**. Further detail of how each of these assets meets East Suffolk's local listing criteria is set out in **Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Non-Designated Heritage Assets Assessment Document**. Owners of these assets had an opportunity to respond to the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft plan. Should an owner wish for their asset to be removed from the list subsequently they should contact the Parish Council for consideration. It should be noted that these are not the only non-designated heritage assets in Oulton, just those considered of local importance when developing this plan.
92. Suffolk County Council manages the Historic Environment Record for the county. Non-designated archaeological heritage assets would be managed through the National Planning Policy Framework. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Advises that there should be early consultation of the Historic Environment Record and assessment of the archaeological potential of the area at an appropriate stage in the design of new developments, in order that the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, East Suffolk Core Strategy, East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan (policy WLP8.40) and Local Plan for the Broads (policy SP5) are met. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service is happy to advise on the level of assessment and appropriate stages to be undertaken.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/culture-heritage-and-leisure/suffolk-archaeological-service/what-is-the-historic-environment-record/>



### **Policy 8: Heritage Assets**

The character, significance and appearance of existing heritage assets will be conserved and where possible enhanced, in line with their significance.

The non-designated heritage assets listed below (shown in **Figure 15** and on the **Policies Map in Appendix A**) have considerable local significance.

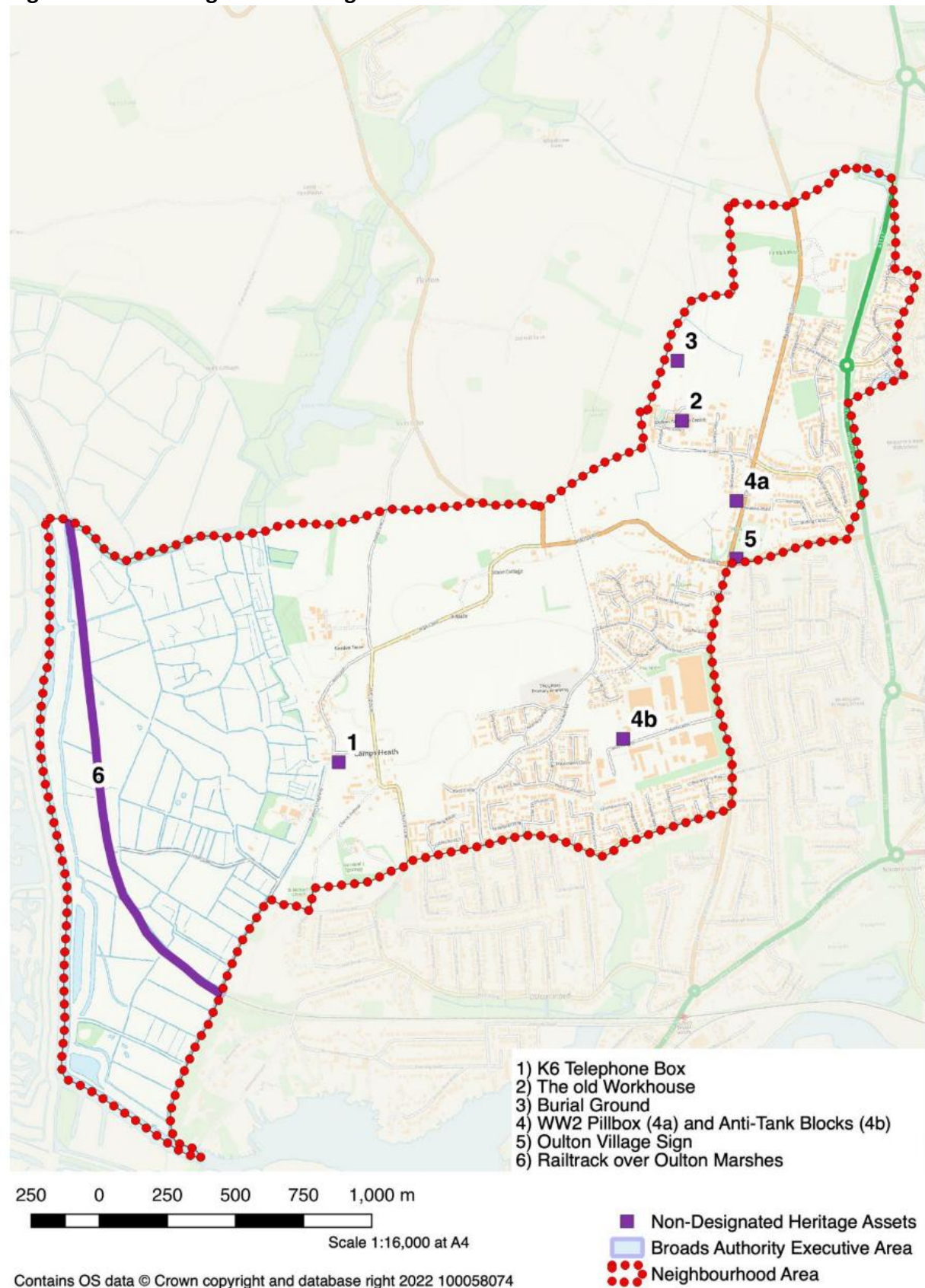
- K6 Telephone Box
- The old workhouse
- Burial ground
- WW2 pillbox and anti-tank blocks
- Oulton village sign
- Railtrack over Oulton Marshes

Development proposals relating to these assets should be considered in accordance with **Policy WLP8.38** of the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan, or **Policy DM11** of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Proposals that are adjacent non-designated assets should demonstrate that consideration has been given to preserving:

- a) The heritage asset and its distinctive historic features as identified in the **Oulton Neighbourhood Plan Non-Designated Heritage Assets Assessment Document**;
- b) The positive elements of its setting that contribute to the asset's historic significance; and
- c) The contribution that the asset and its setting makes to the character of the local area.

**Figure 15: Non-designated Heritage Assets**



## Access and Transport

**This section on the Natural Environment and the policies it contains aims to deliver the following neighbourhood plan objectives for Oulton:**

*Objective J: Reduce the impact of traffic;*

*Objective K: Support community spirit by improving connections to local services and facilities, especially by making walking and cycling safer.*

## Access to Services and Sustainable Transport

93. The National Planning Policy Framework, the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan and the Broads Local Plan support the promotion of sustainable transport such as walking and cycling, which not only helps people get from A to B, but does so in a way that improves health and reduces emissions. There is a reasonable range of local facilities in Oulton, such as dental practice, recreation ground, church, centre for people with learning disabilities, the Blue Boar public house, and community centre. Lowestoft itself is only a 10–12-minute cycle ride away. Lowestoft has a wide range of services and there is the district centre at Oulton Broad. Regular bus services to Lowestoft provide access for those facilities that are beyond walking distance. Access to a wider range of services further afield by train is an option with the train station at Oulton Broad being around 1-2km away for most.
94. Local people value the good access they have to local services, and it is important that these are retained. The planned housing growth could help with this by keeping them viable. The National Planning Policy Framework supports the protection of existing village services and the delivery of new ones in order to maintain the vitality of communities. East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.22 – Built Community Services and Facilities – supports new facilities and provides some protection for existing ones, especially Assets of Community Value. The Local Plan for the Broads also has a policy (SP16 and DM44) relating to this. There is therefore no need for a policy on protecting local services in the Neighbourhood Plan.
95. The evidence base for the neighbourhood plan found that many people in the parish live quite close to where they work, but that very few walk or cycle to work. This suggests that there should be a big opportunity to promote sustainable transport by improving walking and cycling in particular. Furthermore, a small proportion of households have no car and rely heavily on public transport, walking and cycling. For other households with just the one car, many of the household members will not have the use of the vehicle if it is used for commuting and so not available for much of the day.
96. Policy WLP8.21 – Sustainable Transport – in the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan covers the need to promote sustainable transport modes such as cycling and walking. It requires new development to link with existing walking and cycling routes and to enhance them where required. It does not really cover potential cycle routes that do not currently exist and nor does it cover improvements to bus waiting facilities. Policy

SP8 – Getting to and around the Broads - in the Local Plan for the Broads promotes sustainable travel improvements, in particular to walking and cycling links connecting with the waterside.

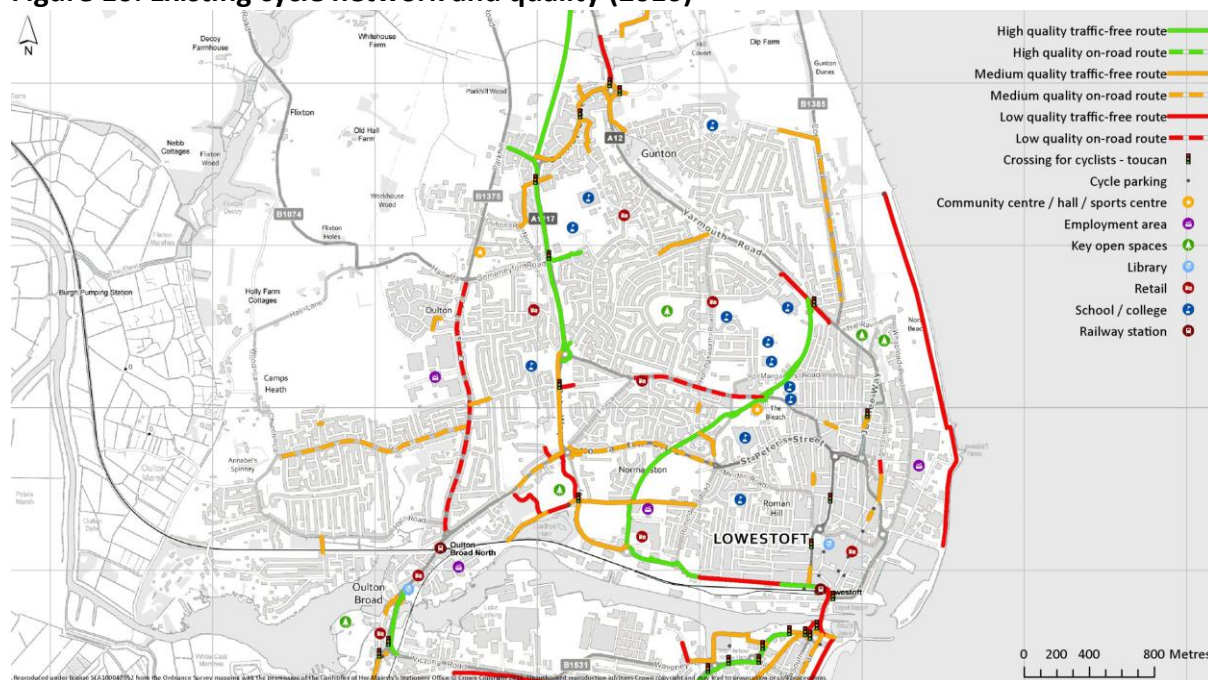
97. There are a range of strategies which support improved access, including Suffolk County Council's Green Access Strategy (2020-2030)<sup>13</sup>. This sets out the Council's commitment to enhance public rights of way, including new linkages and upgrading routes where there is need. The strategy also seeks to improve access for all and support healthy and sustainable access between communities and services through development funding and partnership working.
98. Looking at the infrastructure for sustainable transport, there are a number of issues. The availability of bus stops is not too bad, but many bus stops are just a post and flag, with no shelter. They often do not have raised kerbs to help those with mobility difficulties get on and off the bus. Within the built-up-area of the parish the roads are subject to 30mph speeds limits, or even 20mph, which should make cycling reasonably attractive for the more confident cyclist, and there are footways too for pedestrians, although sometimes these are quite narrow, sometimes only on one side of the road, and sometimes absent completely, perhaps with just verge.
99. Lowestoft has the most significant provision of cycle facilities in the District, helping to provide access to work and other facilities. There are some cycle routes in Oulton, see **Figure 16**, with these being mainly on-road which many novice cyclists will find unappealing, especially if the road is heavily trafficked. Some streets, such as Oulton Street, are also very narrow and hazardous for cyclists. The Waveney Cycle Strategy 2016 identified the key on-road routes as either medium quality (such as on Sands Lane) or of low quality (on Gorleston Road for example). The network certainly requires improvement and indeed some improvements are being made on the Woods Meadow development. Traffic is a concern locally, particularly the speed of traffic, and this suggests a need to provide vulnerable road users such as cyclists with safer, maybe off-road, routes; the route on Millennium Way is a good example.
100. There is strong support in the community for improving walking and cycling links and associated infrastructure such as benches and cycle racks, and wider pavements. Of the various types of improvements for sustainable transport, new cycle routes were the most important, followed by improvements to bus stops and wider pavements. Good access to services and facilities is one of the qualities of Oulton that local people most value.
101. Developments will be expected to take all reasonable opportunities to provide for safe and convenient access for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users. This could include providing new or enhanced facilities as well as improving the physical condition of existing facilities. As required by national and local policy, it is expected that housing and other development will contribute towards improving such local services and infrastructure, including improving bus stops and pavements.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/suffolk-green-access-strategy-2020-2030.pdf>



**Figure 16: Existing cycle network and quality (2016)**



*Source: Waveney Cycle Strategy*

102. East Suffolk Council is currently preparing a Cycling and Walking Strategy for East Suffolk, building on the existing Waveney Cycle Strategy (adopted in 2016). The consultation on the draft strategy took place between November 2021 and January 2022 and adoption is expected in autumn 2022<sup>14</sup>. Cycling and walking opportunities were shared with East Suffolk Council during its initial engagement period (19 October 2020 -7 December 2020). The emerging C&WS involves the identification of Key Corridors (cohesive cycling and walking routes through and between settlements) and one of these Key Corridors should be through Oulton, that would link the Woods Meadow development, and the two East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan allocations in Oulton (WLP2.14 & WLP2.15).
103. While using the car is sometimes the only practical way to get around for some trips, the policy promotes the use of more sustainable modes of transport. The benefits vary from reduced air pollution, reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions contributing to climate change, better health and well-being, less congestion and less money spent on fuel. Developers can contribute by encouraging this, for example with a travel plan and by providing infrastructure.
104. To promote sustainable access, applications must, where reasonable to do so, be able to demonstrate that the site is accessible by cycling and walking and that future occupiers will be able to walk or cycle to most of the local services and facilities and to a bus stop. Contributions and improvements must be proportionately related to the development. These may include the improvements to the Cycling and Walking Strategy network, better bus waiting facilities, or the provision of entirely new footway or footpath links, or the improvement, such as the widening, of existing ones.

<sup>14</sup> [Draft East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy » East Suffolk Council](#)

105. Vehicle use itself can also be made more sustainable. There is considerable local support for the provision of electric vehicle charging points around the parish, whilst **Policy 3** requires such provision as part of new developments.

#### **Policy 9: Sustainable Transport**

Development proposals will need to demonstrate how cycling will be promoted, particularly with regard to improved safety. Improvements should be delivered to support achievement of the East Suffolk Council Cycling and Walking Strategy. This includes provision of secure and convenient cycle storage.

Major development proposals must demonstrate safe, attractive and convenient walking and cycling routes to local services and community facilities, especially to the primary schools, Mobbs Way, play areas and bus stops. New developments will be expected to connect with existing footpaths and footways, and where necessary extended or upgraded facilities will be required.

Reasonable opportunities to promote and enhance the use of public transport, such as improved waiting facilities and suitable road layouts, will need to be taken to improve the sustainability of proposals.

#### **Community Action 1: Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

The community aims to ensure that charging points are provided in public places.

#### **Community Action 2: Permissive Paths**

The Parish Council will work with landowners and public bodies such as Suffolk County Council and the Broads Authority to support the retention of and establish new permissive paths, including those for horse riders.

### **Traffic and traffic Speed**

106. Traffic is a concern, particularly the speed of traffic on some roads through Oulton. Although most of the built-up-area is subject to 30mph or even 20mph speed limits, local reports suggest that average speeds are in excess of the speed limit. Speeding traffic compromises safety, raising the risk of serious injury, and it may deter some people from cycling on-road.
107. The A1117 Millennium Way cuts through part of the parish and this probably diverts a lot of strategic traffic coming off the A12 out of the parish in the most part. The road that dominates is perhaps the B1375 Oulton Street/Gorleston Road. Traffic can be quite heavy and this in places combines with narrow footways, resulting in a feeling



of traffic dominating. When open next year, the Third River Crossing at Great Yarmouth will help to reduce the volume of traffic coming through the village. The website CrashMap indicates that most accidents in the Parish happen on the B1375, and all clusters of more than one accident in the last five years are at junctions on the B1375, such as Union Lane/Oulton Road North. Whilst encouraging sustainable transport could reduce traffic a little, reducing vehicle speeds could help to reduce the dominance and threat of traffic.

#### **Policy 10: Traffic and Speed**

New development will need to ensure speeds within the development and on the connecting local roads are appropriate for the type of development, both to promote sustainable transport as well as manage highway safety. This could include implementing specific schemes that help to reduce traffic speeds.

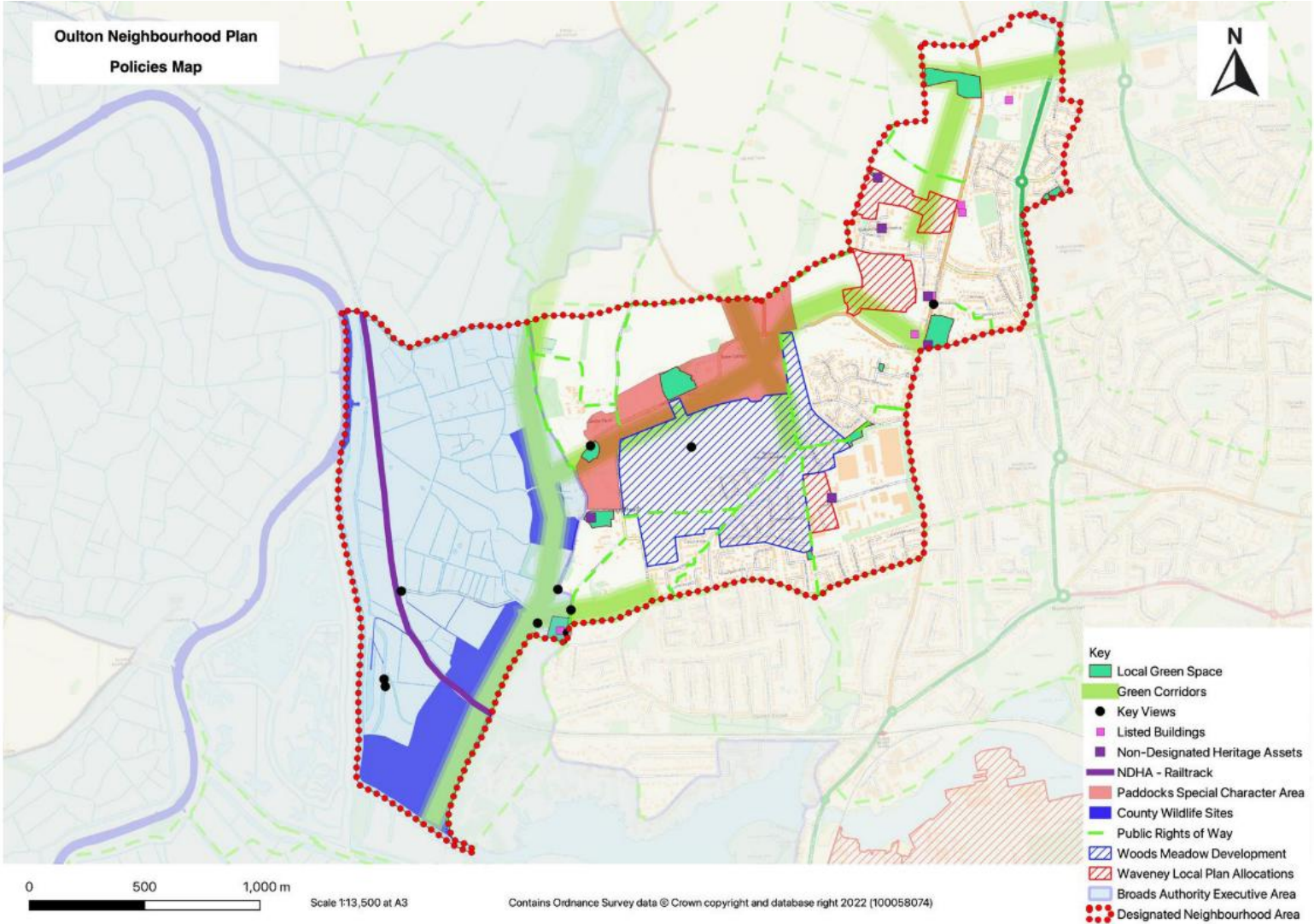
On major developments low speed limits will be reinforced through good design, in accordance with **Policy 3**.

108. A site of 2.8ha at Mobbs Way is allocated in the East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan for employment development, effectively extending the existing employment area. This is East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP2.18. The policy makes specific requirements for landscaping, an ecological survey, Transport Assessment and Travel Plan and archaeological investigation works. Existing permissions have been granted for light industrial and storage / distribution.
109. There have been issues for residents related to lorry parking on Mobbs Way and the Parish Council would like to engage with local businesses and Suffolk County Council with a view to addressing these concerns. The need to address the issue is heightened by the inclusion of Mobbs Way as part of the proposed cycle network.

#### **Community Action 2: Mobbs Way**

The Parish Council and wider community will work with local businesses and Suffolk County Council to address the issue of lorry parking on Mobbs Way.

Appendix A – Policies Map



## Appendix B – Design checklist<sup>15</sup>

Because the design guidelines cannot cover all design eventualities, this section provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below.

Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution.

Design Principle	How taken into account
<b>Section 1: General Principles</b>	
1.1. How does the development integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity?	
1.2. How does the development reinforce or enhance the established village or smaller settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces?	
1.3. How does the development respect the rural character of views and gaps?	
1.4. How does the development harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use?	
1.5. Does the development relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views?	
1.6. How does the development reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness	
1.7. How does the development retain and incorporate important existing features into the development	

<sup>15</sup> Source: AECOM Oulton Design Codes and Guidelines, 2021

Design Principle	How taken into account
1.8. How does the development respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing?	
1.9. How does the development adopt contextually appropriate materials and details?	
1.10. How does the development provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality?	
1.11. Does the development incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;	
1.12. Are all components e.g., buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other?	
1.13. Does the development make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours?	
1.14. How does the development positively integrate energy efficient technologies?	
1.15. Does the proposal include water management and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features which contribute to flood risk management and provide multiple benefits which contribute to water conservation and quality, biodiversity and recreation?	
<b>Section 2: Street grid and layout</b>	

Design Principle	How taken into account
2.1. Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de- sac models? If not, why?	
2.2. Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists, and those with disabilities?	
2.3. What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern? Are these reflected in the proposal?	
2.4. How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?	
2.5. Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?	
2.6. Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?	
<b>Section 3: Green spaces, views and character</b>	
3.1. What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design, i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?	
3.2. Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?	
3.3. Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?	
3.4. How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?	

Design Principle	How taken into account
3.5. Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?	
3.6. In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?	
3.7. How does the proposal affect the character of a rural location?	
3.8. How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?	
3.9. Can any new views be created?	
3.10. Is there adequate amenity space for the development?	
3.11. Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?	
3.12. Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?	
3.13. Will any communal amenity spaces be created? If so, how will this be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?	
<b>Section 4: Buildings layout and grouping</b>	
4.1. What are the typical groupings of buildings?	
4.2. How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?	
4.3. Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?	
4.4. What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?	



Design Principle	How taken into account
4.5. Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?	
4.6. Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?	
<b>Section 5: Building line and boundary treatment</b>	
5.1. What are the characteristics of the building line?	
5.2. How has the building line been respected in the proposals?	
5.3. Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?	
<b>Section 6: Building heights and roofline</b>	
6.1. What are the characteristics of the roofline?	
6.2. Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing, and scale?	
6.3. If a higher-than-average building is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?	
<b>Section 7: Household extensions</b>	
7.1. Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, or does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing, or overshadowing impact?	
7.2. Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?	

Design Principle	How taken into account
7.3. Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?	
7.4. In case of side extension, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?	
7.5. Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?	
7.6. Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?	
7.7. Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?	
7.8. Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves, and roof been addressed in the context of the overall design?	
7.9. Do the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?	
<b>Section 8: Car parking solutions</b>	
8.1. What parking solutions have been considered?	
8.2. Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?	
8.3. Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?	
8.4. Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?	
8.5. Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?	
<b>Section 9: Architectural details and contemporary design</b>	

Design Principle	How taken into account
8.6. Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height, massing, and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.	
8.7. Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?	
8.8. Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?	
8.9. If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?	

## Appendix C: Maps of Local Green Spaces

**OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

**JENKINS GREEN & POND**

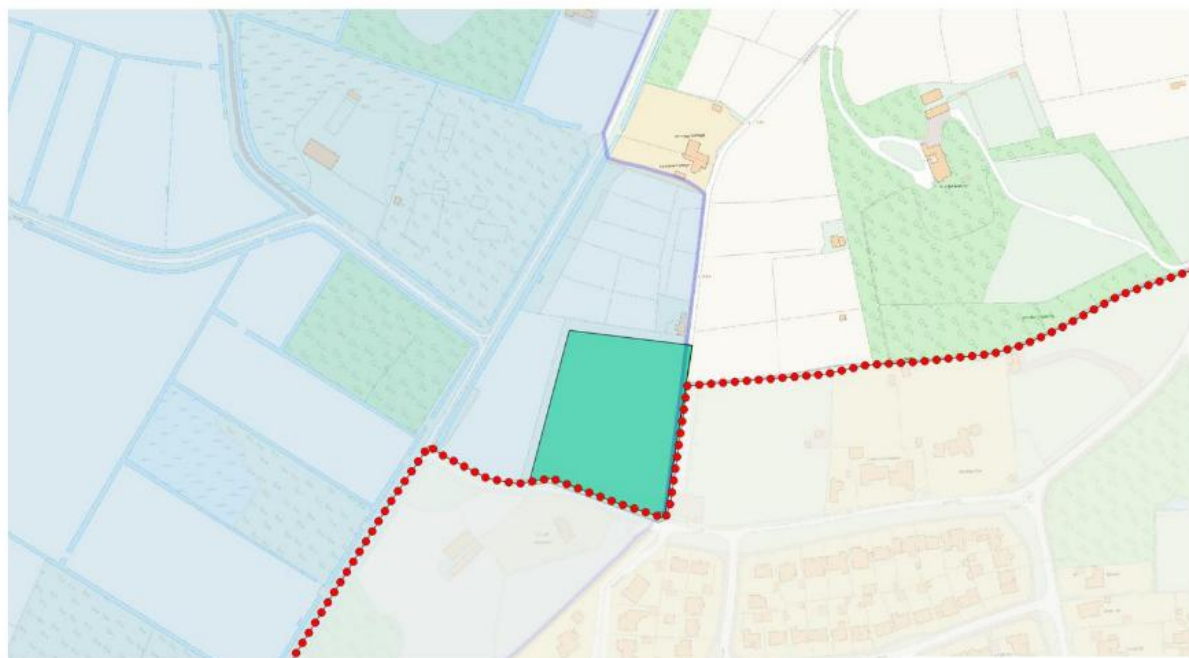


0 25 50 m  
Scale 1:750 at A4  
Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2022) 100058074  
Source: Ordnance Survey



**OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

**ST MICHAELS CHURCH & GRAVEYARD**



0 50 100 m  
Scale 1:2,500 at A4  
Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2022) 100058074  
Sources: Ordnance Survey & Natural England

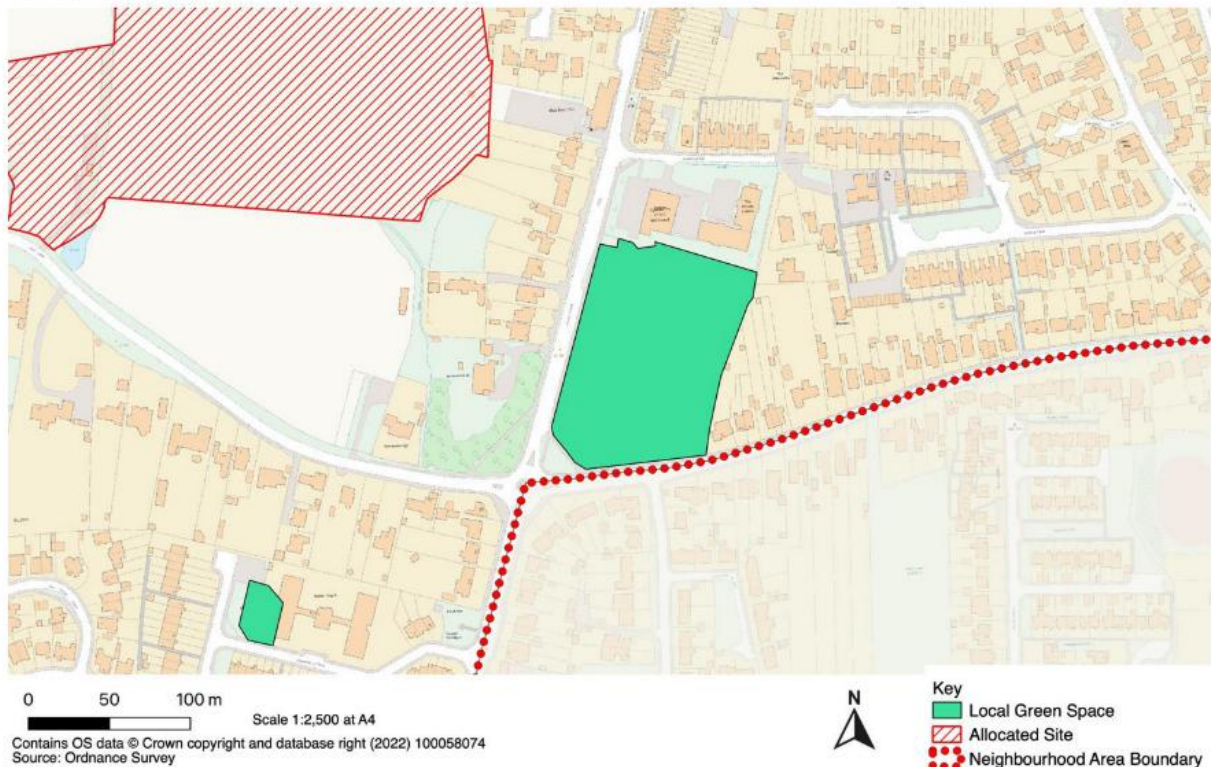




# **OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

# **COMMUNITY CENTRE PLAYING FIELD**

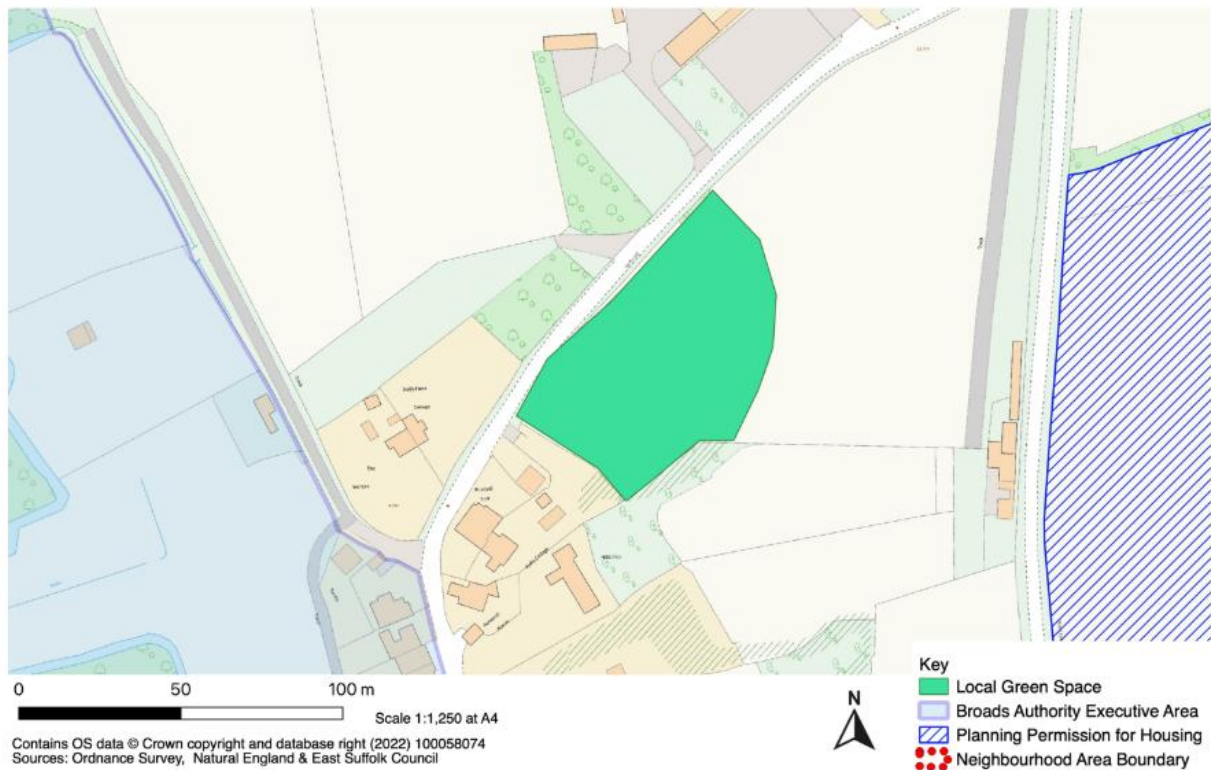
## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE**



# **OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

# **CAMPS HEATH GREENSPACE**

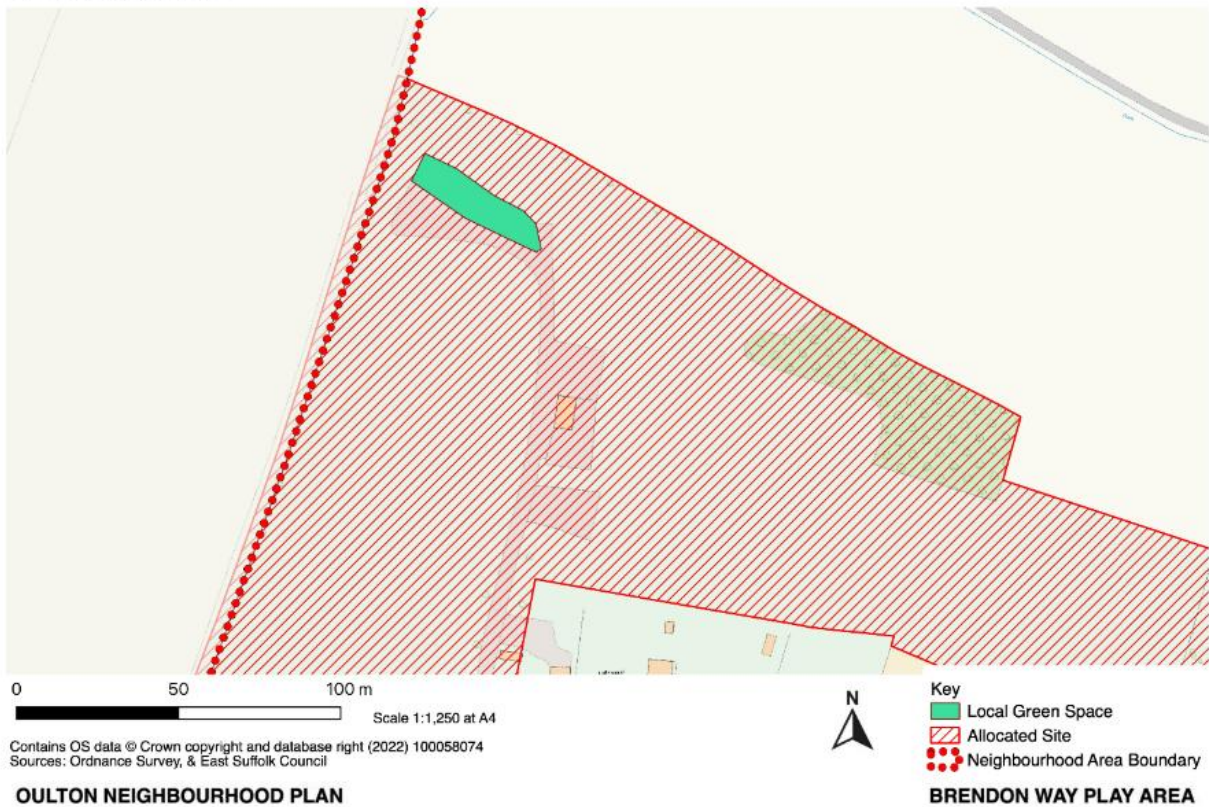
## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE**



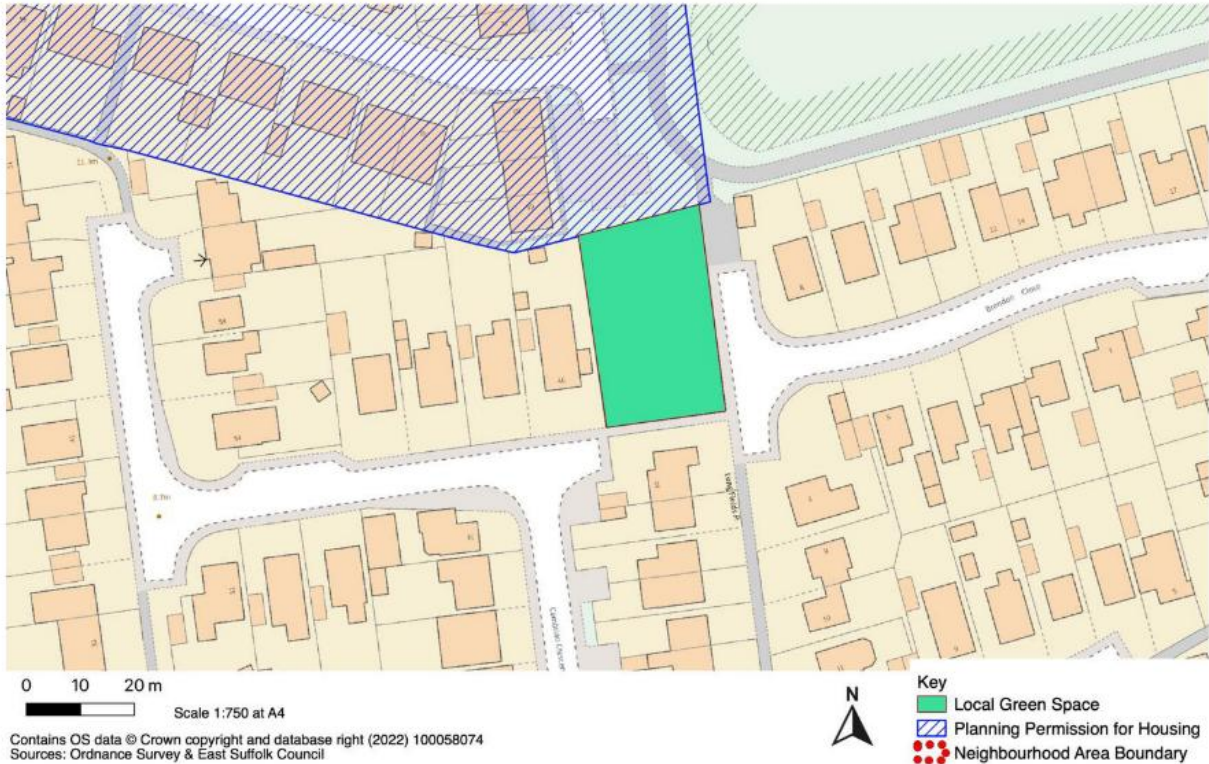


**OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**LOCAL GREEN SPACE**

**BURIAL GROUND NEAR UNION LANE**



**OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**LOCAL GREEN SPACE**





# **OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

# **BLOOMSBURY CLOSE PLAY AREA**

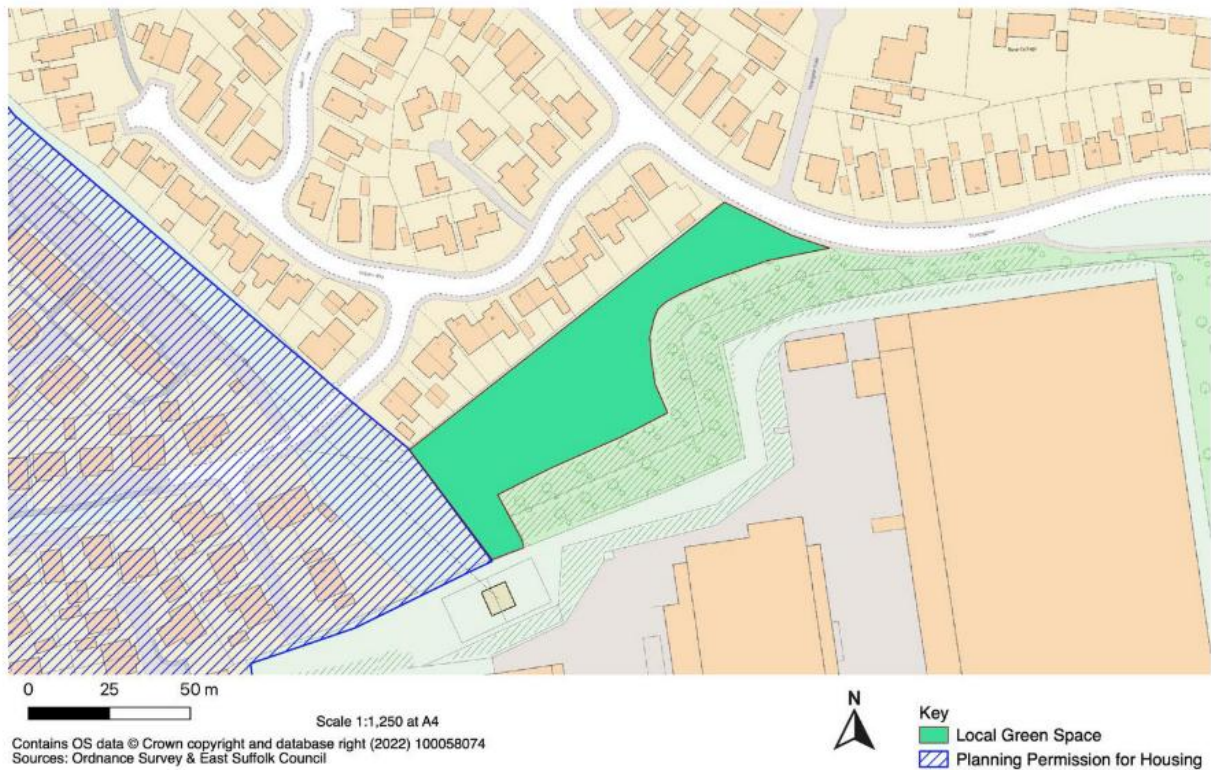
## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE**



# **OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

# **DUNSTON DRIVE PLAY AREA**

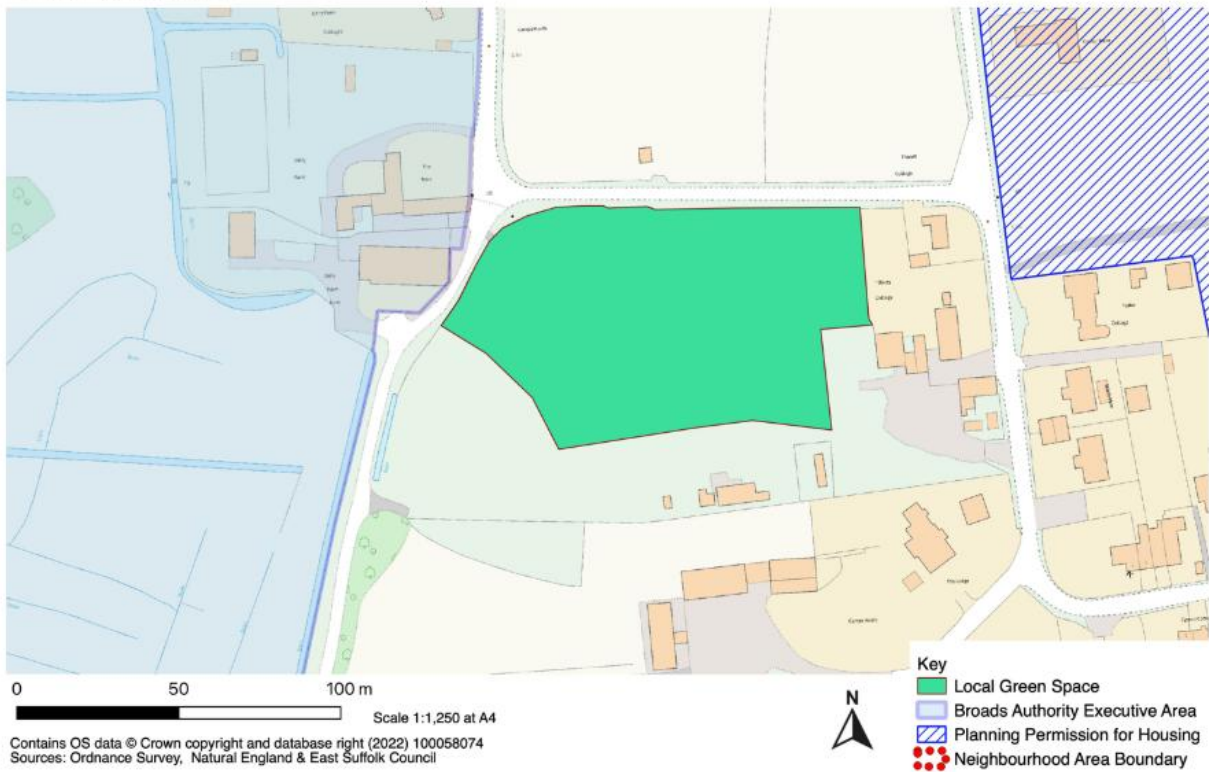
## **LOCAL GREEN SPACE**



## OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## BOWLING GREEN CAMPS HEATH

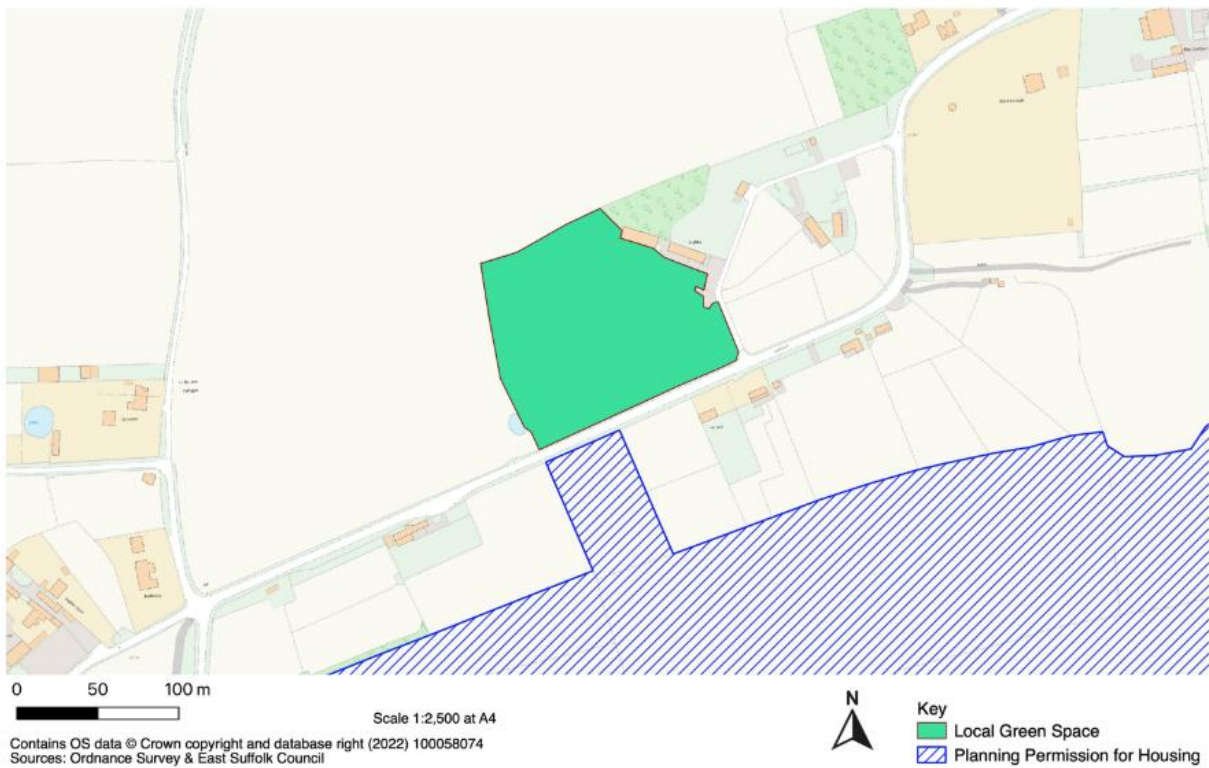
### LOCAL GREEN SPACE



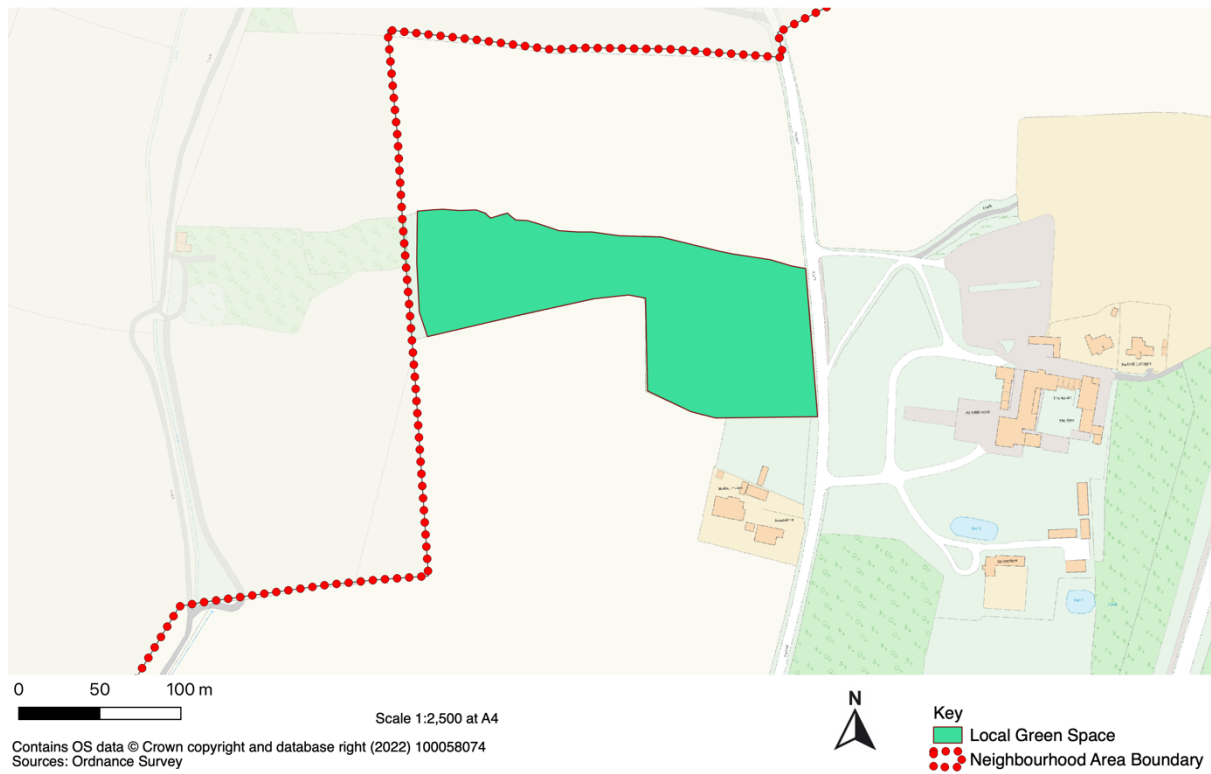
## OULTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## FOOTBALL PITCH CAMPS HEATH

### LOCAL GREEN SPACE



LOCAL GREEN SPACE





## Appendix D: Justification for Local Green Space Policy Wording

### **Background**

The Local Green Space (LGS) policy is important, as is the precise wording. Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that, *“Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”*

This at least implies that LGS designations require a policy for managing development, rather than just a list of those designations. This seems likely as:

- First, it refers to LGS ‘policy’ for managing development. Policy should set out how decisions should be made when determining a planning application. A list of LGSs does not do this as it does not guide the decision maker, simply informing them of which sites are LGSs.
- Second, Para 103 implies that LGS policy is a separate entity to national green belt policy.
- Third, development affecting a LGS cannot be determined using green belt policy; green belt policy applies only to green belt, not to LGSs. An attempt to use green belt policy is likely to be unlawful and challengeable.

Regarding *Lochailort Investments Limited v. Mendip District Council and Norton St Philip Parish Council*, [2020] EWCA Civ 1259, this found that LGS policy need to be consistent with Green Belt policy and that any departure needs to be explained in a reasoned way. According to that judgement, *“The ordinary meaning of “consistent” is “agreeing or according in substance or form; congruous, compatible”. What this means, in my judgment, is that national planning policy provides that policies for managing land within an LGS should be substantially the same as policies for managing development within the Green Belt.”*

The neighbourhood plan needs to have ‘due regard’ to this requirement. ‘Due regard’ does not mean LGS policy has to conform to the requirement in every respect, but any departure will nevertheless need to be fully justified and explained. The judgements support this, explaining that *“provided the departure from the NPPF is explained, there may be divergence between LGS policies in a neighbourhood plan and national Green Belt policy.”*

### **Requirements of Green Belt Policy**

It is therefore necessary to assess Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to identify its features and requirements.

National Green Belt policy at para 148 of the NPPF explains that openness and permanence are essential characteristics of Green Belt and that it why it is designated - to preserve its openness and permanence. This is the purpose. The designation of LGS aims to protect smaller parcels of land for a variety of purposes that are in addition to their openness, such as its ecology, recreational value or history as set out as examples in the national framework. These must (NPPF para. 101) be capable of enduring beyond the plan period; this is a lower bar than needing to be permanent. It can endure beyond the plan period as long as there is

not undue pressure for needed housing on those parcels of land, either by virtue of allocations for meeting local housing need being provided in the neighbourhood plan, or there being other land available to meet any unmet need. Another threat to the capability to endure would be a long list of different types of development that could be appropriate or acceptable.

The judgement in the case of *R (Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and others) v North Yorkshire County Council* [2020] UKSC 3, found that openness is not just a spatial or volumetric concept, but a visual one such that visual impact is a key matter. This is likely to be a particular matter of relevance for LGSs given that they tend to be small and so any development will have a visual impact.

The NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use. Green Belt policy sets out that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It goes on to say that ‘very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

New buildings are inappropriate development in Green Belt. There are some exceptions to this. Green Belt policy sets out a list of development that is not inappropriate, such as in-fill in villages, and affordable housing. Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes mineral extraction and local transport infrastructure. These examples might still not be permitted if they would result in harm as para 148 says, *“When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.”*

There are many exceptions listed at paras. 149 and 150 of the NPPF. As Green Belt areas are large, it is plausible that many such developments could take place within the Green Belt without undermining its overall openness and permanence or resulting in only minor harm. This is not the case for LGSs, which cannot be extensive tracts of land. This means that even small-scale development risks undermining the purpose of designation and having an immediate and harmful visual impact. LGS policy that simply refers to the list of Green Belt exceptions in the NPPF could undermine the designation process as this large number of exceptions would suggest that the designation is not capable of enduring beyond the plan period. LGS policy therefore needs to consider each in turn, and with the aim of limiting the number.

### **Justification for LGS Policy 5**

The table below reviews each element of the Oulton LGS policy and provides justification for the diversion from Green Belt policy. In particular, the table justifies diversion from Green Belt policy with respect to what is considered an exception to inappropriate development, for example infill or minerals extraction.

LGS Policy	Justification for deviation from Green Belt Policy
<p>New buildings are inappropriate development with the only exceptions to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Buildings for forestry or agriculture where the Local Green Space is used for commercial woodland or farmland.</li> <li>b) The provision of appropriate facilities in connection with the existing use of land where the facilities preserve the openness of the Local Green Space and do not conflict with the reasons for designation that make it special to the community, such as for recreation or ecology.</li> <li>c) The extension or alteration of a building if it does not impact on the openness or the reasons for designation that make the Local Green Space special to the community; or</li> <li>d) The replacement of a building provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.</li> </ul>	<p>Para 149 (of the NPPF) sets out that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate apart from identified exceptions (listed a-g below). A number of these exceptions could undermine the openness of LGS or impact upon their reasons for designation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Buildings for agriculture or forestry; <b>this is a reasonable exception</b> for LGS policy where land is commercial woodland or farmland as it may otherwise hinder someone's business.</li> <li>b) Provision of appropriate facilities; <b>this is a reasonable exception</b> for LGS if such development could support the ongoing use and help to make the LGS capable of enduring.</li> <li>c) Extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; <b>this is a reasonable exception</b> for LGS where it does not impact upon its openness or reasons for designation;</li> <li>d) Replacement of a building, provided it is the same use and not materially larger; <b>this is a reasonable exception</b> for LGS;</li> <li>e) Limited infill in villages; <b>This is not a reasonable exception</b> for LGS. Openness is not just a spatial concept, it is also visual, as determined by the Supreme Court. Any infill on small LGS designations will seriously undermine their openness and their reasons for designation.</li> <li>f) Limited affordable housing for local community needs; <b>This is not a reasonable exception</b> for LGS. Any affordable housing on small LGS designations will seriously undermine their openness and their reasons for designation.</li> <li>g) Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use; <b>this is not a reasonable exception</b> for LGS. It</li> </ul>



LGS Policy	Justification for deviation from Green Belt Policy
	is unlikely that LGS will be brownfield when identified in accordance with Para 101, and infilling and complete redevelopment is likely to fully undermine the designation of the LGS.
<p>Other appropriate development includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engineering operations that are temporary, small-scale and result in full restoration; or</li> <li>b) The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; or</li> <li>c) Material changes in the use of land where it would not undermine the reasons for designation that make it special to the community.</li> </ul>	<p>Para 150 sets out that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of Green Belt and do not conflict with the purpose (listed a-f). A number of these exceptions could undermine the openness of LGS or impact upon their reasons for designation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Mineral extraction; <b>This is not a reasonable exception.</b> Though highly unlikely to apply in any LGS, but nevertheless the quarry would be so large and the operations so long term that it would not enable the LGS to endure beyond the plan period.</li> <li>b) Engineering operations; <b>This is a reasonable exception.</b> LGS policy could allow for this if temporary, small-scale and restored fully</li> <li>c) Local transport infrastructure; <b>This is not applicable</b> as it specifically requires a Green Belt location</li> <li>d) Re-use of buildings; <b>This is a reasonable exception.</b></li> <li>e) Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); <b>This is a reasonable exception.</b> LGSs are designated for reasons related to their specific use or quality, such as recreation or ecology. Change of use could be supported in LGS policy as long as the new use would not undermine the reason for designation that makes it special to the community.</li> <li>f) Development, including buildings, brought forward under Community Right to Buy or Neighborhood Development Order; <b>this would not apply</b> as the community is designating the land as LGS so as to keep it open and protect its special qualities.</li> </ul>
Proposals that are on land adjacent to Local Green Space are required to set out how any impacts on the special qualities of the green space, as identified by its reason for designation, will be mitigated.	There is no requirement in Green Belt policy that relates to adjacent land. However, the setting of LGS or adjacent land use may be part of or impact upon what makes it demonstrably special, particularly where LGS are very small.

# Oulton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036



## FULL COUNCIL

**Wednesday, 22 February 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Cabinet Members' Report and Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Steve Gallant Leader of the Council

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
-------------------------------	------

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To receive the Cabinet Members' Report and the Outside Bodies Representatives' Report to Council, for information.	
<b>Options:</b> Not applicable.	

## Cabinet Members' Reports to Council

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Letitia Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:letitia.smith@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">letitia.smith@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07824 865973

### LEISURE

The leisure operators continue to perform strongly but face significant challenges, as does the leisure industry as a whole. Firstly, whilst recovery from the pandemic has continued, with swimming particularly performing strongly and being almost back to pre-pandemic numbers and even above for swimming lessons, the fitness memberships continue to sit in the region of 85% of pre-pandemic numbers. This has plateaued but with the current cost of living crisis hasn't dropped but isn't reaching previous membership numbers.

Both operators are performing slightly above the national average. However, whilst strongly performing the utility and energy costs are now having a substantial effect on operating costs, particularly with the heating of the swimming pools. The Government's energy support package doesn't cover the leisure industry from April. There are campaigns nationally for the Government to step in and support the leisure industry and both operators are mitigating costs as much as possible and ESC have supported with pool covers that can save energy and heating loss over the night-time period when closed. Whilst this is helping, the energy costs are substantial. This is being monitored and regular meetings are being held with operators to support where possible.

### Everyone Active

The project to remove the old heating units off the Waterlane Leisure Centre sports hall roof is now complete. Other smaller items of work have also been addressed during this project with some additional new covered cycle parking, new fencing, and landscape planting in the pedestrian entrance access from Princes Road that was previously overgrown and unattractive.

Everyone Active have engaged with the Communities team and sit on the relevant Community Partnership meetings. They have engaged with an array of partners to deliver many different Health & Wellbeing initiatives. These tend to fall in with our priorities, mainly as a result of the strong links between their Active Communities Manager and our Communities Team (Nicole Rickard).

Both the EA leisure centres deliver programmes on site – such as Active Seniors programmes (multi sports), Walking Football, Sporting Memories (a programme aimed at, but not solely dementia) SEN (Special Educational Needs) activities like swim galas (attended by Jordan Catchpole), multi-sport activities and events. Not only are programmes delivered on site, but they also reach out into the communities delivering similar programmes for example Active Seniors at the Pair Tree in Halesworth.

Everyone Active also provide free memberships to Cared for Children, people with Parkinson's disease, Ukrainian refugees, all of which have had some take up but still require spreading the word further in our communities. Both facilities are open as Warm Spaces to those looking to get out of home and into a warm place.

### **Places Leisure**

With the proposed new Felixstowe Leisure Centre unlikely to be complete for a few years, improvements in the existing leisure centre are being planned to improve the customer experience. These improvements will be programmed in from the new financial year and the areas to be improved are currently being finalised.

Places Leisure are launching their new healthy community's strategy which will go live in March and have also invested in their IT infrastructure to improve the customer journey from memberships, website and online etc. following customer feedback.

The key priorities in their Healthy Communities Strategy aligning with the East Suffolk Strategic Plan and themes from the Community Partnership groups are:

1. Long Term Health Conditions
2. COVID recovery
3. Inactivity in young people
4. Inactivity in older people
5. Mental Health
6. Exercise referral programme

Some of the projects that Places Leisure have been supporting as part of this include the 'Warm Spaces' scheme, providing hot drinks, biscuits and games, the launching of Sporting Memories (a programme aimed at dementia activities within the centres), Suffolk Family Carers Activities, GP Referral, Cancer Rehabilitation, COVID recovery programme and the Extra Time Partnership.

As with most operators in the leisure industry, there have also been challenges with recruitment and retention. The wider Places organisation have reviewed rates of pay due to the cost-of-living crisis and restructured to support staff through this. They have also launched a hardship fund with staff applying for up to £500 and in January every staff member received a cost-of-living payment of £250.

Both operators look to provide more than your conventional health and fitness offerings and reaching out to those where real impacts can be made in the communities. This will be developed further going forward and a new ESC position, Senior Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Officer will support this work.

### **Play**

The Outdoor Playing Space Fund has contributed £219,457 towards play and sport projects in the old Suffolk Coastal Area. Projects include installation of new adult gym equipment in Nacton, to basketball and football opportunities in Melton. The installation of seats in Bawdsey to the installation of floodlights in Felixstowe. Purdis Farm saw a large refurbishment at Murrills Park with wilding flower areas, hare sculptures and accessible

equipment. Redevelopment of play areas are due in Beccles, Carlton Colville and Felixstowe in the Spring.

We have been supporting the community of Leiston and Southwold in their effort to raise funds to update their skateparks.

### **Cycling**

The UCI Masters Cyclo-cross took place in December, ahead of the weekend of racing a school's day was held for the local schools in the Ipswich and South Suffolk School Sports Partnership. The young people in years 5 – 8 were given the opportunity to take part in science activities from Kinetic Science, bike safety talks from Suffolk Police, created a art mural with Rock Paper Scissors, got to experience part of the cyclo-cross track with British Cycling, Suffolk County Council's road safety team gave a taster in bike ability games and Loose Cannon delivered an action packed fitness glass.

A report was commissioned, and it would that the total net impact of the event on the local economy was £601,850, based on the expenditure of participants, spectators, event organisers, contractors and staff. Expenditure by participants and spectators, including on accommodation, food and drink, shopping, off-site entertainment, and transport, was £499,238. 64% of the respondents were visitors to Suffolk that stayed overnight in Suffolk

It featured more than 600 competitors from 20 different nations, riding laps of a 3km circuit of trails and obstacles. About 6,000 spectators are estimated to have attended.

### **Awards**

Following a delay due to Covid, the East Suffolk Awards will be returning later this month celebrating the best in local businesses, people, and community groups. The winners will be announced at a special event being held at Snape Maltings.

### **Operation Camouflage**

Operation Camouflage adapted to the opportunity of running an activity as part of the East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Holiday Activity Fund project (HAF). An application in 2019 to the Army Covenant Fund secured £9,500 towards Operation Camouflage and this was carried forward to allow 2022 to go ahead, £15,000 from the Holiday Activity Fund and £4,500 from the Army Welfare service. The activity expanded to take place over 16 days, every Tuesday to Friday from 26<sup>th</sup> July – 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022. It took place at MOD Woodbridge utilising the community buildings off base and the local primary school playing field. Every day there was an opportunity for 60 young people aged 8 – 16 years to attend from a mixture of backgrounds including those eligible for free school meals in the Ukrainian families, children in care, military families and the wider public.

Over the course of the four weeks, 106 individuals came from East Suffolk and 58 came from military families, this worked out to be 437 attendances from civilians and 304 military. We had 61 spaces that amounted to non-attendance over the four weeks. We provided transport to the young people that were eligible for free school meals, and we had 167 pick-ups over the course of the four weeks. Discussions are in place to look at how it could be delivered in 2024.



## Suffolk Community Games

ESC supported the development and delivery of the Suffolk Community Games, a day of activity for young people in Suffolk. Each local authority had an allocation of spaces for the young people in the district to attend a free event taking place in Bury St Edmunds. The activities included BMXing, Climbing, Dancing, Circus Skills, Paddleboarding and Skateboarding. Inspire Suffolk, Suffolk FA and Ipswich Town Community Trust were there offering come and try it activities. Transport was provided for both the participants and their family to come and support. The event also had the Queens Baton that was touring the Commonwealth ahead of the Commonwealth Games, this provided a unique opportunity for the young people to see this once in a lifetime experience.

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:james.mallinder@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">james.mallinder@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07810 815879

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Stephen Burroughes – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, ICT and Commercial Partnerships
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:stephen.burroughes@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">stephen.burroughes@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07783 357940

- **CUSTOMER SERVICES & EXPERIENCE TEAMS**

As we approach the end of the council's current 4 year term, it is worth reminding ourselves of how far we have travelled on our journey since 2019. During Covid, workstreams were changing the 'way' the service worked to reduce demand and free up capacity (focusing on Interactive Voice Response to inform customers of relevant service changes, and enabling greater demand and resource management, provided targeted communications) and divert resources to ensure resilience if staff became ill and to maintain customer services; services were able to flex to take on new services to support colleagues and customers; closing down F2F contact points to keep staff and customers safe.

The service receives on average over 175,000 phone calls and over 22,000 emails per year. Mostly around Council Tax, Garden Waste, and ESC tenant enquiries. During the pandemic over 2,000 vulnerable residents were assisted including 1,800 community referrals.

What are we doing now? work continues across all departments to gain buy-in and support for an 'experience' approach to all that the teams do – i.e. the need for end-to-end service delivery, utilise and learn from customer feedback and the value gained to improve public

confidence, increase satisfaction, minimise failure demand, reduce financial pressures, on resources.

What have been the Highlights? Implementing a brand-new Customer Service Delivery Model (known as our One Front Door) – designed be more flexible – to be both proactive and responsive to the needs of our customers.

Digital Champions - To encourage and inform residents about online services. Over 11 million people lacking digital skills, and 3.6 million are completely offline altogether.

Our redesigned customer access and digital coaching approach is proving successful. Historically, our CS public facing offer was only delivered at Marina CS Centre, and Felixstowe, Beccles and Woodbridge libraries 5 days a week. Since the pandemic, the analysis of the operational data has shown a significant shift in the ways public contact and use council services. We always said, we didn't want to 'sleepwalk back into the way things were' and as a result we now have a presence in more locations across the district than ever before. Together with our digital coaching approach, we now operate 2 days a week in at the Marina CS Centre in Lowestoft, but also now in Aldeburgh, Felixstowe, Halesworth, Leiston, Saxmundham & Woodbridge Libraries. This is based on demographic need but also allows us to be available for those who have specific needs and who need support in a face-to-face setting.

Where do we want to be in 23? Evolve the service offer and ensure a service delivery model is able to continue to deliver a flexible approach to service delivery, to adapt and continue to meet the changing needs and expectations of our customers and residents and offer quality channel choice. Maybe an Apple Store style experience themed building in Lowestoft could be developed to not only inform but to assist? Make sure the right skills are in place to drive this forward.

Lastly, our Marina Customer Service Centre has gone through an amazing refresh offering a remodelled setting for customers, well worth a visit if you have time.

- **COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Plans for the move over to the LATCo, East Suffolk Services, continue at pace, it is crucial that all measures, plans and operational elements are firmly in place for 1<sup>st</sup> July, and I know the various workstreams are coming together to ensure this is a smooth process. This council should be proud in the fact that it is our ambition to establish ESSL as a true flagship commercial business organisation, delivering a quality service throughout East Suffolk.

Our leisure partners, (Places Leisure and Everyone Active) continue to deliver a first-class leisure offer and have enjoyed a very successful 2022 with healthy numbers of customers taking up swimming sessions and engaging well across all our leisure centres. Clearly, there are pressures around the cost of energy and related elements and a paper is being brought to cabinet in March to explore the council's decarbonisation approach across our assets.

- **ICT & DIGITAL**

The success of the council's digital towns programme has reached a significant moment with all 12 market towns now enjoying free town centre public Wi-Fi together with the 'springboard' support package of help to digitally enable businesses. Footfall monitor installations have gone extremely well with the collection of interesting data to enable targeting of future investment and service delivery. When residents access the free Wi-Fi, they will be asked to create an account and provide some basic information, and they can also sign-up to receive marketing emails about the town. Once they sign-in to the Wi-Fi they will be directed to a landing page which will be set to the town's local website e.g. Visit Felixstowe, Framlingham, Lowestoft or Discover Woodbridge, Beccles, Halesworth etc with pages being added as things evolve, this provides greater visibility to the existing town promotional assets and direct visitors to relevant local information.

The final towns to be connected were Beccles, Bungay and Halesworth completing a challenging timetable and thanks must go to all our teams for making this possible. These new Wi-Fi zones have been created by installing equipment in each town that will give visitors access to the internet in the main pedestrian areas.

## Outside Bodies Representatives' Reports

Suffolk Police and Crime Panel	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor Mark Jepson
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:mark.jepson@easstsuffolk.gov.uk">mark.jepson@easstsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01394 278622

Cllr Mark Jepson is the Chair of Suffolk's Police and Crime Panel. The following paper has been provided to update Councillors on the meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The Panel recognised the challenges the Police and Crime Commissioner faced in the forthcoming year to ensure Suffolk Constabulary continues to deliver a good service to the residents of Suffolk.

This report also provides background information on the structure and responsibilities of the Panel.

### Background

The Suffolk Police and Crime Panel is responsible for supporting and challenging the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in the delivery of his functions. It is a joint committee, established under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

The Panel has statutory functions, as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011:

- Reviewing the [Police and Crime Plan](#);
- Reviewing the PCC's [Annual Report](#);
- Carrying out confirmation hearings for certain senior appointments in the PCC's office;
- Carrying out confirmation hearings for the Chief Constable;
- Investigating complaints about non-criminal behaviour of the PCC; and
- Supporting and scrutinising the effective exercise of the functions of the PCC.

The Panel comprises elected members of local authorities across Suffolk working alongside two independent co-opted members. Together the Panel members should reflect the breadth of communities in Suffolk. The Police and Crime Panel has 13 members in total, comprising:

- Four County Councillors;
- Seven representatives from the District and Borough Councils in Suffolk; and
- Two independent co-opted members

The Panel is politically balanced, with the 11 local authority councillor representatives appointed to achieve political proportionality across Suffolk.

### **Meetings**

The Panel holds 4 formal meetings per year, in January, March, July and October, plus addition meetings as required, for example to consider the appointment of the Chief Constable or to carry out confirmation hearings for senior officers in the PCC's office.

The Panel has met 6 times during 2022/23 to date, with one meeting due to take place on 24 March 2023.

### **Latest Meeting**

The Panel met on 27 January 2023 to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed Policing Precept for 2023/24. Following review of the PCC's detailed precept report and associated Medium Term Financial Plan, and a wide-ranging question session with the PCC, with input from the Chief Constable, the Panel supported the PCC's proposal to increase the policing precept by £14.94 (6.0%) per annum for a 'Band D' property for 2023/24.

The next meeting of the Panel will be on 24 March 2023, when the Panel will support the effective exercise of the PCC's functions by reviewing actions he has taken under Objectives 2 and 3 of his Police and Crime Plan 2022-25.

<b>Beccles in Bloom</b>	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor Sarah Plummer
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:sarah.plummer@easstsuffolk.gov.uk">sarah.plummer@easstsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07741 750480

Beccles in Bloom continue to be responsible for the management of the planting and maintenance of the numerous small garden areas and containers around Beccles.

The huge day-to-day task of keeping the containers watered last summer was undertaken by Michael (Mr Tidy) alongside his other roles around the town.

Beccles Community Gardeners consist of a number of enthusiastic volunteers. Some volunteers undertake the care of a specific area on an ongoing basis whilst others prefer to turn up at the group gardening sessions organised every few weeks during the growing season. The Community Gardeners as a whole are doing a great job of keeping the many growing areas within the town to an acceptable standard. They work under the capable guidance of Camilla, who organises the working parties, and Stephen who creates planting plans and supplies wholesale plants. An increase in the number of volunteers for 2023 would make this group even more productive and Beccles Town Council are looking at ways to encourage this.

Minutes of the latest meeting attached. Spring meeting had to be re-arranged and will take place on Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Suffolk Waste Partnership	
<b>Representative:</b>	Councillor James Mallinder
<b>Contact Details:</b>	<a href="mailto:james.mallinder@easstsuffolk.gov.uk">james.mallinder@easstsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07810 815879

I attended the recent Suffolk Waste Partnership meeting.

Much discussion took place over the recent announcement regarding the deposit return scheme and the impact this might have on our waste collections. It was asked if plastic bottles were in the blue bin collections, could we remove them and claim under the scheme? If so, would this scheme result in a financial impact to the business model?

We also noted how disappointing it was, that with climate concerns at breaking point, it had taken 6 years of consultation to have this discussion. It was felt that glass not being included in this scheme was a wasted opportunity.

Again, we wait for further statutory guidance on changes in waste collection for households.

## Appendices

Appendices:	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Minutes from the last Beccles in Bloom Meeting in October 2022

Background reference papers:	
None.	



**Minutes of a Meeting of the Beccles in Bloom Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 6pm, in the Committee Room at the Town Hall**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Nathalie Chidley (NC) (Chair)  
Cllr Barry Darch (BD) (Mayor)  
Cllr Gillian Birrell  
Mark Ross (ESDC)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Candi Turner (Deputy Town Clerk)

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 0**

**1. To receive and approve apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Lever, plus Sub Committee members Janet Gandy, Mu Gurbutt and Stephen Malster

**2. To receive Declarations of Interest or any requests for the granting of dispensations in relation to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda**

There were none.

**3. To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Pride in Beccles Sub-Committee meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**RESOLVED:** To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Pride in Beccles Sub-committee meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

**4. *To receive work update from the Community Gardeners and actions arising from this***

Chair reported that she is in regular contact with Camillia (head of Community Gardeners) and is happy with what she is doing. Chair asked the committee if they had anything to add. Cllr Birrell added that Camillia had expressed a need for more volunteers and wondered if that was something the committee could help with. Chair thought it would be a good idea to put a message out on the Town Council website and Facebook page. Cllr Birrell referred to a recruitment day that had been discussed which would be held at Blyburgate Hall in

March 2023 and thought this would be a good opportunity for promotion of the Community Gardeners.

Chair commented on the planters at the Church Tower and reported that the volunteers that look after those planters want more freedom to work under their own initiative. Chair asked the committee what their thoughts were. The committee agreed that the volunteers do a good job in this area and were happy to let them take care of the maintenance as they wish.

A discussion took place about Exchange Square Gardens regarding ASB. It was concluded that little could be done about this.

Chair reported that there had been a request to refresh the gravel at the War Memorial. A quote was provided from Betts. The committee agreed the work and Chair offered to help with laying the gravel.

Chair asked the Deputy Clerk for an update on Hi-Vis jackets. The Deputy Clerk reported there had been a donation of jackets by Jen Clarke at the Co-Op. Jen's budget only covered the cost of the jackets without printing. The Deputy Clerk was researching the most cost-effective way of getting the jackets printed but had been unsuccessful.

Chair reported that Camilla had found a volunteer to maintain the planters at Queens Road and asked for extra funding for the planting. The committee agreed.

Chair wanted to acknowledge the work that Michael (Mr Tidy) had done through the extreme temperatures in maintaining the planters through watering. The committee passed on their thanks.

## **5. To discuss ideas to publicise the work of the Community Gardeners more widely to attract volunteers**

Chair suggested posting updates from the Community Gardeners Facebook page onto the council's Facebook page. Cllr Birrell asked for some text to be published in the next edition of the Town Council Charter. Chair thought it would be a good idea to ask Camilla for some photographs to post on the Town Council website. Cllr Darch said it might be possible to publish something in the Community News and offered to write something.

## **6. To discuss a solution to the gold banding on the planters**

Chair noted that this is a frequent item of discussion. The committee questioned if gold banding was necessary. Cllr McGregor thought that this was not a necessary requirement, and the council should be looking to reduce plastic. The committee agreed and Chair invited committee members to remove any gold banding from existing planters.

## **7. To discuss future management of the Beccles in Bloom budget change**

Chair was unsure how the committee were managing budget control and didn't know who was overseeing it. Chair would like to have a discussion with Stephen Malster regarding this.

Chair reported that she had had a discussion with the Deputy Clerk regarding the best way forward and it was suggested that all spends are reported to the Deputy Clerk and documented on a spreadsheet. Cllr Birrell thought there was an agreement in place where a budget was set for Spring and Autumn spending which was reported to the committee in advance.

The Deputy Clerk reported that £1,500 was allocated to each planting season and this had been exceeded by almost £200 for spring planting leaving a shortfall for Autumn.

Chair recommended that the budget is increased and that she speaks to Stephen and requests regular financial updates to be reported to the Deputy Clerk and documented on a spreadsheet.

A discussion took place regarding the budget and how much extra would be needed for Autumn planting. The committee agreed an extra £500 would be sufficient and it was therefore agreed to

**RECOMMEND** To ask the Assets Committee for an extra £500 on this year's spending and to increase the BiB budget to £3,500 for 2023/24

## **8. To put forward items for the next agenda**

To discuss spending of next year's budget

Thank you party for Community Gardeners/tour for Councillors

Questions for East Suffolk Norse

## **9. Date of next meeting**

31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 at 6pm in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall