

# Draft modified Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036



Submission draft  
December 2025

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# 1. Modifying a 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1 The Saxmundham Neighbourhood Development Plan made in July 2023 provided the first ever statutory planning policy document specifically for the parish of Saxmundham. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the 2011 Localism Act which sought to decentralise policy making to the local level, give more powers to communities and the right to shape future development where they live.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan was supported by over 87% of residents who voted in the Referendum and the Neighbourhood Plan Area covered the civil Parish of Saxmundham (as it was at the time of Neighbourhood Area designation in 2017), shown in figure 1 below.

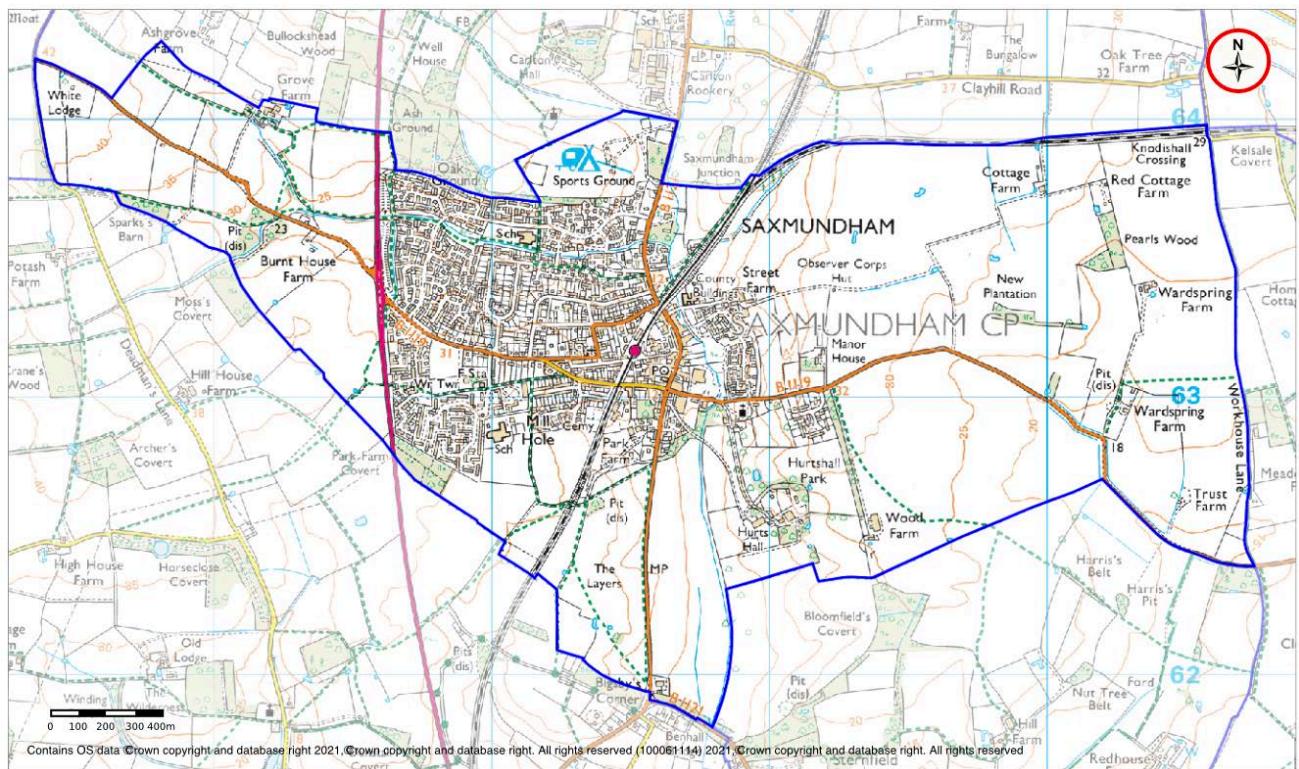


Figure 1: 2017 Saxmundham Neighbourhood Area (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

1.3 After a Community Governance Review in April 2023, the Saxmundham Parish Boundary was amended to include land that was previously in the parish of Benhall and Sternfield. The reason for the Parish Boundary change, which was initiated by Saxmundham Town Council with agreement from Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council, was so that all of the land allocated in the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020, as the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood would fall within the parish boundary of Saxmundham. In December 2023, the Town Council applied to East Suffolk Council to amend the Neighbourhood Area so that it was consistent with the new parish boundary. The request was approved by East Suffolk Council on 30th April 2024. The new Neighbourhood Area is shown in figure 2 below.

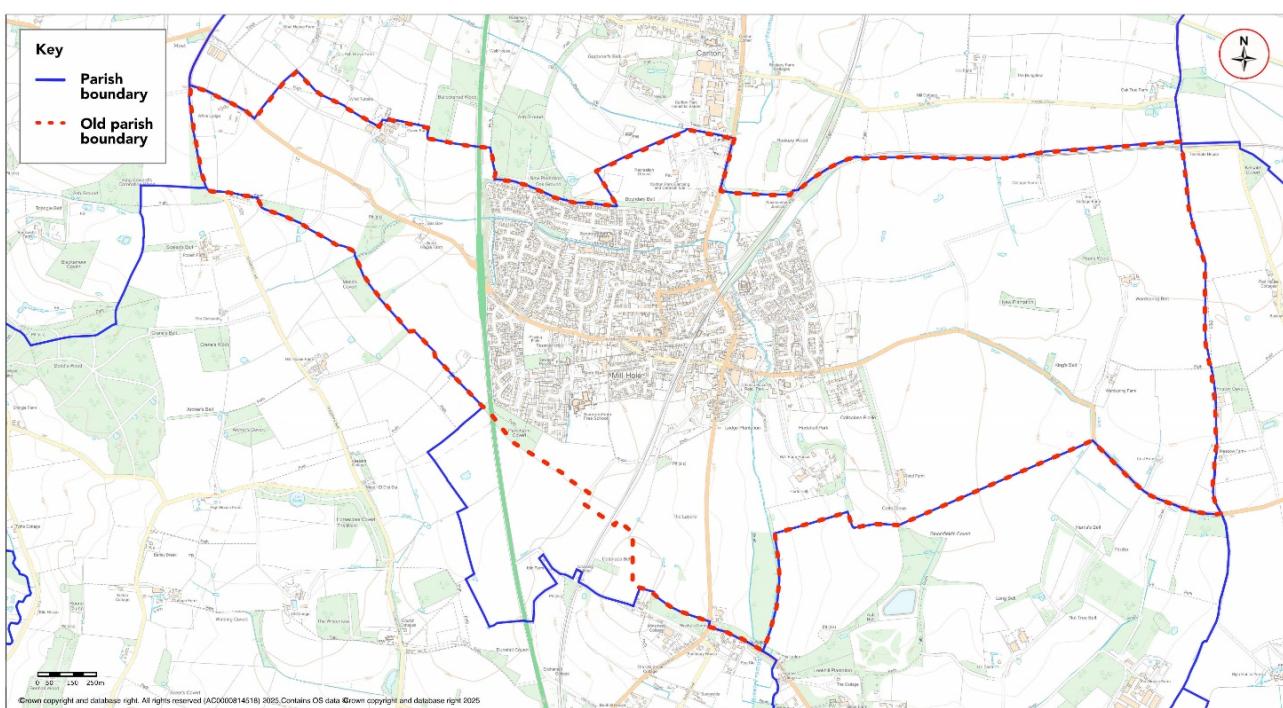


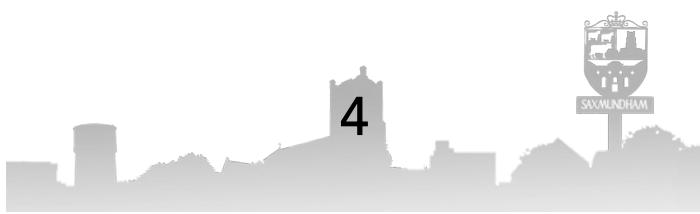
Figure 2: Map showing the new and old parish boundaries (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

1.4 Saxmundham Town Council began a review of its made Neighbourhood Plan shortly afterwards. There are two principal reasons for reviewing or 'modifying' the 2023 Neighbourhood Plan. These are:

- To ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies can successfully influence the development of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood to gain maximum benefit for the community.
- To ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan contains suitable policies for influencing the mitigations required as a consequence of the multiple

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) proposed in the local area.

- 1.5 The Modified Neighbourhood Plan (this document) takes the original Plan and adds further detail and justification to it in respect of the two key issues outlined above. The overarching vision and objectives are still consistent with those of the original Plan with the desire to ensure that Saxmundham remains a place which retains its distinct natural and historic characteristics, and where the services and facilities have the capacity to meet the needs of residents. Even though the made Neighbourhood Plan is still relatively up to date there have been a number of changes to national planning policy and guidance which need to be reflected in the Modified Neighbourhood Plan. In September 2025, the Local Plan reached years since adoption.
- 1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan remains a community-led document for guiding the future development and use of land in the parish between 2022 and 2036. The 2023 Neighbourhood Plan remains in force until it is superseded by the Modified Neighbourhood Plan. Once the Modified Plan is made East Suffolk Council will use it to determine planning applications. Saxmundham Town Council will use the Plan to respond to planning applications.
- 1.7 The Modified Neighbourhood Plan covers the same plan period as the made Neighbourhood Plan, and looks ahead to 2036, which is consistent with the current Local Plan.
- 1.8 The Modified Neighbourhood Plan operates in the context of the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan's vision and objectives will be realised through policies, projects, promotions and advocacy. Most policies will guide new development across the whole plan area; some are specifically tailored to the needs of particular zones. The Town Council will promote, and collaborate with others, to realise projects which will further the vision for the town.
- 1.9 The Neighbourhood Plan's policies and proposals will rely on investment in the town by private, public, and voluntary agencies. Many of the specific proposals will only happen through partnerships and collaboration. Part of the purpose of the Plan is to give the sense of direction and momentum which will build confidence and commitment.
- 1.10 By undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan and the subsequent 'Modification', the aim remains to improve and protect Saxmundham, in the interests of its



people, as a lively, attractive, successful, and sustainable 'heritage' market town:

- playing its full role as employment and service centre for the surrounding area, and gateway to East Suffolk's attractions,
- promoting and implementing future-looking policies for economic development, social cohesion, and enhancement of the local environment,
- ensuring the successful physical, environmental and social integration of new development in the Garden Neighbourhood with the existing community,
- working with partners in public, private and community sectors to ensure coherent policy making and delivery for the town, and access to the required resources and infrastructure,
- addressing the challenges posed for the future by climate change and the need for environmental protection and improvement, across the range of policies and activities.

1.11 The Modified Neighbourhood Plan will continue to ensure that development takes place in an appropriate way for the parish. It has been positively prepared, with the purpose of supporting and managing Saxmundham's growth, not preventing it. In practice, higher level planning documents such as the Adopted East Suffolk Council – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan cannot feasibly deal with all of the issues particular to every town and village across the entire district, whereas the Neighbourhood Plan can by providing additional details which reflect specific local circumstances and conditions. Whilst many residents felt that the amount of growth proposed in the Local Plan for Saxmundham was excessive, it is recognised, since the Local Plan is approved, that the Neighbourhood Plan has the responsibility, in so far as it is able, to ensure that growth is well managed and beneficial, and in accordance with the Local Plan.

### **The process of reviewing or modifying a made Neighbourhood Plan**

1.12 This Modified Neighbourhood Plan introduces two new chapters – one relating to the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood (which builds on Local Plan Policy SCLP12.29) and the second in respect of the mitigation of the impacts of Energy Infrastructure Projects. It should be noted that the inclusion of a chapter and policy relating to the Mitigation of Energy Projects does not endorse the proposed energy projects in the area and any policies in the Neighbourhood Plan would only come into play should those proposals be endorsed through the National Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)



process. This NSIP process is separate to the Neighbourhood Plan and is not influenced by the Neighbourhood Plan's content.

- 1.13 The remainder of the Plan has been updated where necessary but its overall direction and strategy remains unchanged. The regulations covering neighbourhood planning require that, where significant changes are made to a Plan, it has to be taken through full public consultation and if necessary another referendum before it can be adopted.
- 1.14 In the case of the Modified Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan, the Plan is not seeking to make any additional allocations for new housing development over and above that already set out in the Adopted Local Plan. It does however include new areas of policy to provide guidance for the development of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and new policy in mitigating the impacts of the Major Energy Infrastructure Projects in the area.
- 1.15 In developing the draft 'Modified' Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council sought to ensure that the statutory standards for consultation on Neighbourhood Plans for Pre-Submission consultation were met. Further details are included in the Consultation Statement which accompanies this Submission Version of the Plan. This Submission Version of the 'Modified' Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). Figure 3 outlines the stages in the process.



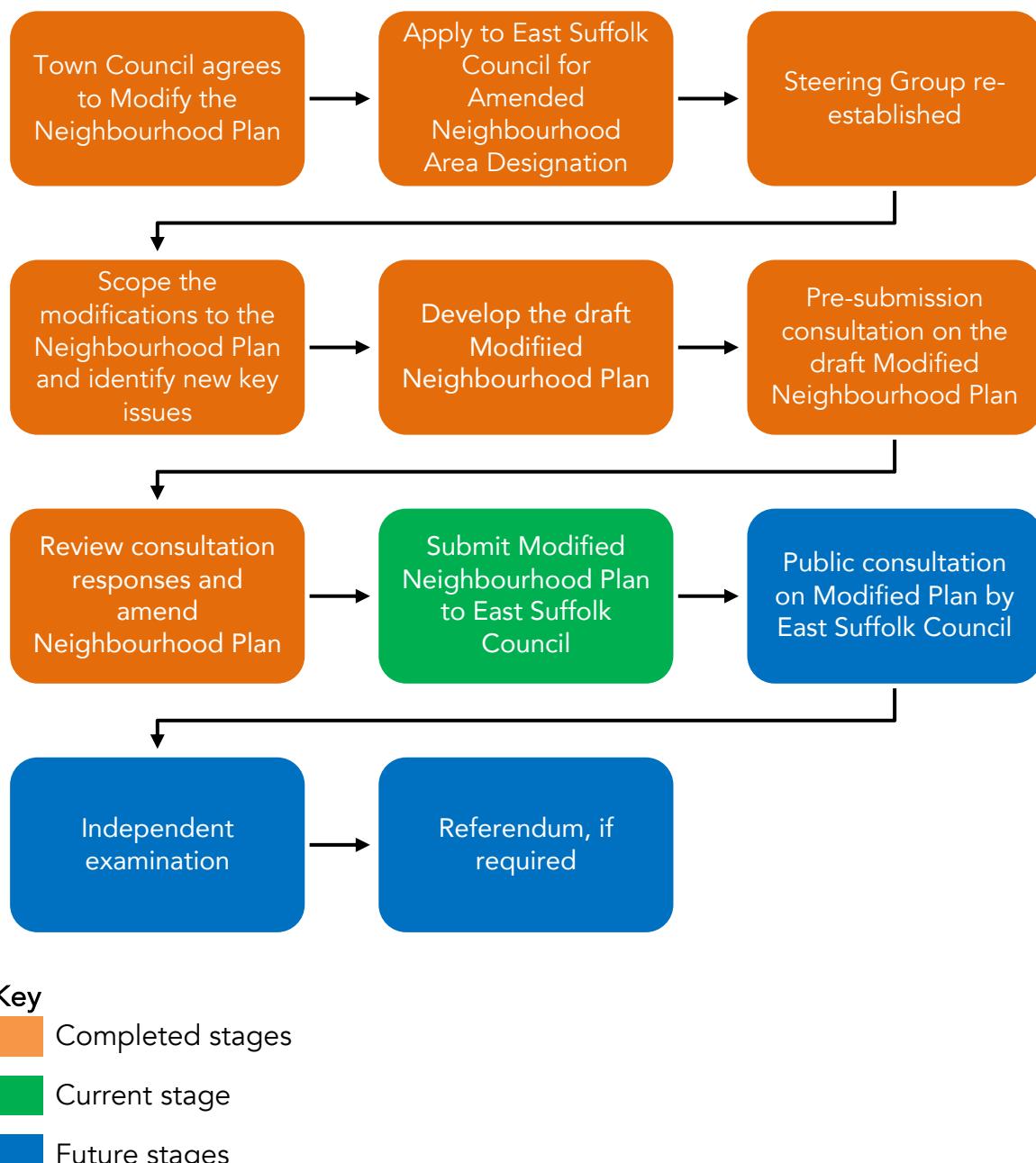


Figure 3: Stages of the Modified Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Accompanying supporting documents:

1.16 This Submission Version of the Modified Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by the following documents:

- **Basic Conditions Statement** – outlines how the statutory basic conditions have been met

- **Consultation Statement** – outlines how and when the public have been consulted on the content of the Plan
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report** – to determine whether the Modified Neighbourhood Plan requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (produced by East Suffolk Council)
- **Habitats Regulations Screening Report** – identifies any potential impacts on protected species or habitats (produced by East Suffolk Council).

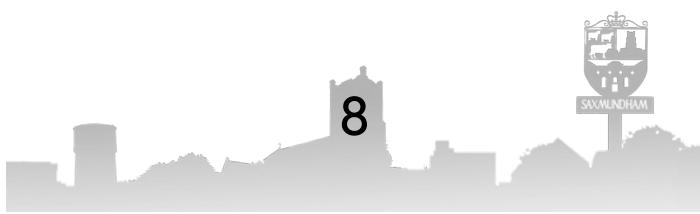
1.17 Neighbourhood Plans provide clarity, through their policies, on what will be expected from development proposals in the parish, and ensures that the impact of development is anticipated and planned for in Saxmundham. A Neighbourhood Plan is a significant document and will carry legal weight so that developers have to take note when considering future developments in the parish.

### National and local planning policy context

1.18 Every local planning authority in England is required to prepare a Local Plan. Local Plans include all of the local planning policies for the district's area and identify how land is used, determining what will be built and where. The relevant Local Plan for Saxmundham is the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan which was adopted in September 2020. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, along with any Neighbourhood Plan, provides the basis for determining planning applications and future development in the local area and should be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework. It should be noted that the Suffolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan Adopted in 2020 is also part of the 'development plan' for the area.

1.19 Despite a relatively short time between the 2023 Neighbourhood Plan being made and the beginning of work on the Modified Neighbourhood Plan, there have been some significant changes in the National Planning Policy context.

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been reviewed twice since the 2023 Plan was 'made' – in December 2023 and in December 2024. The Neighbourhood Plan Review needs to be in general conformity with the national planning policies.
- The Government (from July 2024) has shifted emphasis in national policy specifically in the areas of housing number calculations, design, Net Zero and affordable housing (specifically social rent).
- There will also be new housing requirement figures for East Suffolk, although these are to be reflected in the Local Plan Review, once this



has begun. The position at the time of writing is set out here:  
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Open-Data/East-Suffolk-Housing-Position-Statement-September-2025-Update.pdf>

1.20 Development is defined as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land'.<sup>1</sup> Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 emphasises that the planning system continues to be a 'plan-led' system and restates the requirement that 'determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.



Figure 4: Spatial and strategic policy context: relationship between the NPPF, Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan. Own diagram.

## Policy framework for Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan

1.21 Saxmundham is identified as a 'Market Town' in the settlement hierarchy of the adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (SCLP 2020). The Local Plan (through Policy SCLP 12.28) indicates that Saxmundham will be enhanced as a market town, employment and service centre, serving a key role in meeting the needs of residents, surrounding rural communities and visitors, recognising the opportunities offered by its road and rail connections. The following Local Plan policy provides the context for the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.

<sup>1</sup> Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

## **Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP12.28: Strategy for Saxmundham**

Saxmundham will be enhanced as a market town, employment and service centre, serving a key role in meeting the needs of its residents, surrounding rural communities and visitors, recognising the opportunities related to the connections offered by the rail and A12 transport corridors.

The strategy for Saxmundham is to:

- a. Enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre, including through protecting and enhancing the historic core of the town and the railway station.
- b. Utilise opportunities related to the presence of the railway and the proximity to the A12.
- c. Diversify and expand employment opportunities.
- d. Enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity around and beyond the town, particularly to the town centre and the railway station.
- e. Promote quality of life including through enhancements to networks of green infrastructure.
- f. Increase the provision of housing and affordable housing and provide greater choice in the mix of housing available.
- g. Provide for a safe and inclusive community; and
- h. Protect and enhance the natural environment.

The creation of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood will provide new opportunities for housing, employment and community facilities, focused on the principles of an inclusive community and integration with Saxmundham and the surrounding countryside through enhancing green infrastructure networks.



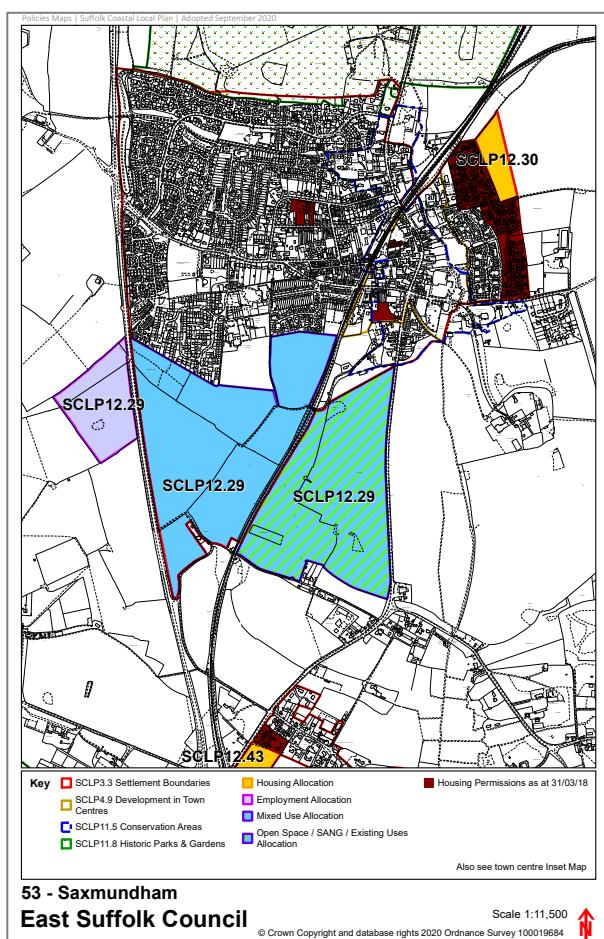


Figure 5: Saxmundham policies map, Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (adopted 2020).

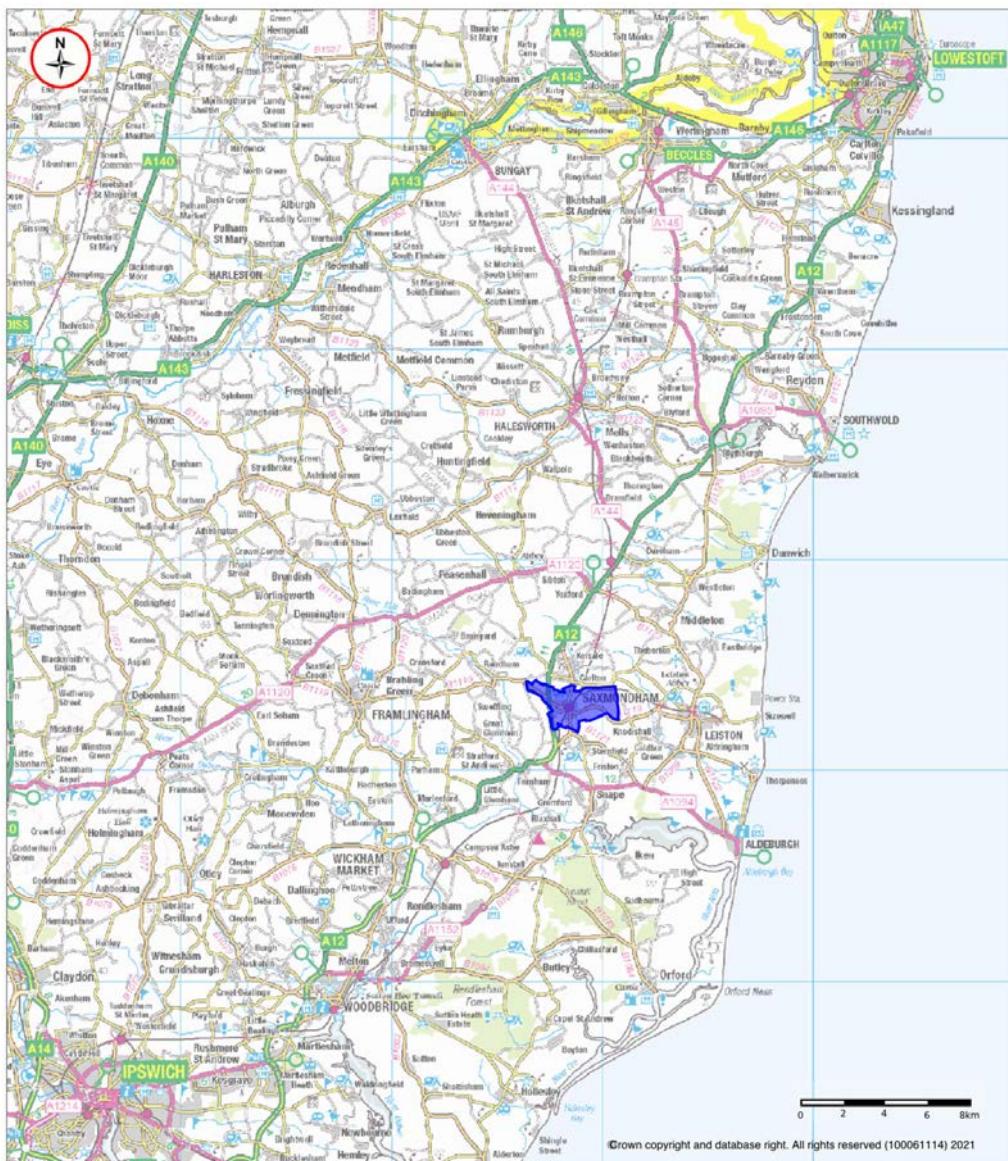
- 1.22 The Local Plan identifies an area of approximately 67 hectares for development as the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood which is expected to provide an education led scheme of approximately 800 dwellings, community facilities and employment land. This issue is dealt with in detail in **Chapter 12**.
- 1.23 In addition to the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, the Local Plan makes a further allocation which is SCLP12.30: Land North-East of Street Farm, Saxmundham. This allocation is for 2.18ha and approximately 40 dwellings northeast of Street Farm, to the east of the built-up area of Saxmundham. This has now been developed.
- 1.24 Due in particular to the level of new housing growth proposed in the Local Plan, the Modified Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating any further specific sites for development. Instead, its proposed policies will focus on managing the impacts of the proposed growth and ensuring that the community benefits are realised. A number of areas are however identified as offering future potential for a range of types of development that it is considered would benefit the parish (see **Opportunity Zones policies** section).



Kelsale B1121  
Lowestoft

## 2. Saxmundham parish

2.1 Saxmundham is in a strategic location being roughly equidistant from Ipswich and Lowestoft, the two principal economic centres of East Suffolk district. It is served both by the A12 and the East Suffolk line of Greater Anglia railways. It also acts (largely due to its station) as a 'gateway' to the Suffolk Heritage Coast, the tourist resorts of Aldeburgh and Thorpeness and the international music venue at Snape Maltings.



## Demographic profile of Saxmundham<sup>2</sup>

2.2 The population of Saxmundham parish/ward in 2021 according to the Census was 4,773, up from the 2011 census figure of 3,644. The town has grown by nearly one-third in the last 20 years. The population in 2021 was 52.4 per cent female and 47.6 per cent male which showed a slight increase in the number of males since the 2011 census. Further information can be accessed from the Saxmundham Data Profile 2024 which accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.3 The following table shows the age categories in Saxmundham parish from the 2011 and 2021 Census.

Age category	Census 2011 number	Census 2011 percentage	Census 2021 number	Census 2021 percentage
Total	3,644	100%	4,773	100%
Aged 15 and under	706	19.3%	964	20.2%
Aged 16 to 64 years	2,061	56.5%	2,716	56.9%
Aged 65 years and over	877	24.1%	1,093	22.9%

Figure 7 above: Age structure of Saxmundham parish Census 2011 and 2021. Source: Nomis website. Information obtained 09.09.2024.

2.4 The graph below shows the age of Saxmundham, East Suffolk and Suffolk residents in 5-year age categories in 2021. There is a higher percentage of young people in Saxmundham aged 19 years and under compared to East Suffolk and Suffolk. There is a lower percentage of people aged 50 to 74 years in Saxmundham parish compared to East Suffolk and Suffolk.

<sup>2</sup> Data from the Suffolk Observatory website.



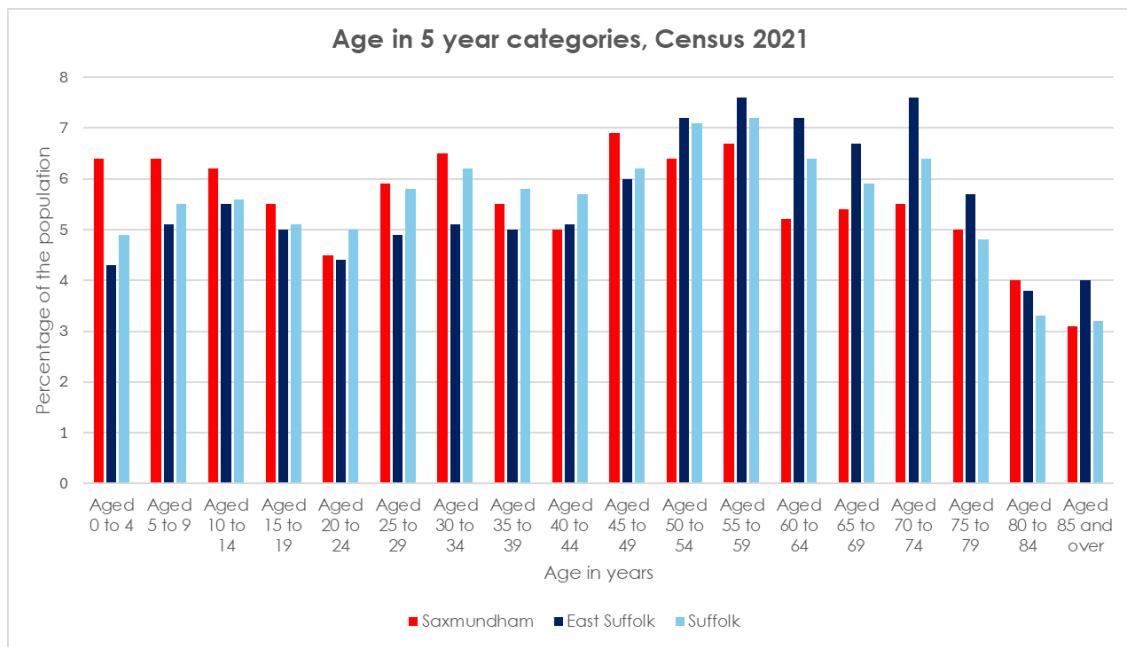


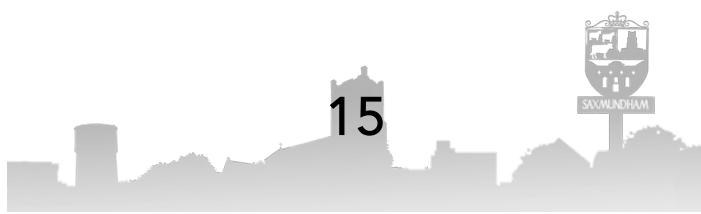
Figure 8 above: Graph showing the age of Saxmundham, East Suffolk and Suffolk residents in 5-year age categories. Census 2021 (source: [www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/](http://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/). Information obtained 09.09.2024).

## Housing

2.5 Over the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2024, East Suffolk Council records show there were 485 net additional dwellings built in Saxmundham parish. Full details are shown in the Data Profile.

Year	Housing completions Saxmundham parish
2023/2024	4 (provisional figure, may be subject to change)
2022/2023	1
2021/2022	21
2020/2021	26
2019/2020	50
2018/2019	56
2017/2018	68
2016/2017	45
2015/2016	76
2014/2015	138
<b>Total 2014–24</b>	<b>485</b>

Figure 9: Housing completions (net additional dwellings) 2014 – 2024 in Saxmundham parish. Source: East Suffolk Council Planning Policy and Delivery monitoring records. Information obtained 06.09.2024.



2.6 Data from the 2021 Census shows that there were 2,176 households in Saxmundham parish. This is an increase in households of 25.4% from 1,623 households in the 2011 Census.

Saxmundham parish Tenure	Census 2021 number	Census 2021 percentage
All Categories	2,169	100%
Owned or shared ownership	1,306	60.21%
Social rented	526	24.25%
Private rented or lives rent free	337	15.54%

Figure 10: Tenure of households in Saxmundham parish from the 2021 Census.

2.7 The table below shows Saxmundham parish household composition data from the 2011 and 2021 Census. There is an increase in one person households and a decrease in one family households between the 2011 and 2021 Census. Saxmundham parish has a higher percentage of one person households compared to East Suffolk and Suffolk..

Household Composition	Saxmundham Census 2011 percentage	Saxmundham Census 2021 percentage	East Suffolk district Census 2021 percentage	Suffolk Census 2021 percentage
All Categories	100%	100%	100%	100%
One person household	32.6%	35.9%	32.3%	31.2%
One family household	64.2%	60.6%	63.8%	64.4%
Other household types	3.2%	3.5%	3.9%	4.5%

Figure 11: Table showing household composition from the 2011 and 2021 Census for Saxmundham parish, East Suffolk and Suffolk. Source: Nomis website. Information obtained 10.09.2024

## Health

2.8 The following table shows how the population reported their general health in



the 2021 Census.

General Health Census 2021	Saxmundham parish percentage	East Suffolk district percentage	Suffolk Percentage
Very good health	43.5%	43.3%	45.6%
Good health	36.6%	36.0%	35.8%
Fair health	14.6%	15.0%	13.6%
Bad health	4.0%	4.5%	3.9%
Very bad health	1.4%	1.2%	1.0%

Figure 12: Table showing general health reported by the population of Saxmundham parish, East Suffolk district and Suffolk in the Census 2021. Source: Nomis website. Information obtained 10.09.2024.

2.9 The table below shows Disability reported by all usual residents of Saxmundham parish, East Suffolk district and Suffolk in the 2021 Census. The percentage of residents who are disabled under the Equality Act is slightly higher in Saxmundham parish compared to East Suffolk and Suffolk.

Disability Census 2021	Saxmundham parish percentage	East Suffolk district percentage	Suffolk percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Disabled under the Equality Act	21.1%	20.6%	18.3%
Not disabled under the Equality Act	78.9%	79.4%	81.7%

Figure 13 above: Table showing disability reported by all usual residents of Saxmundham parish, East Suffolk district and Suffolk in the 2021 Census. Source: Nomis website. Information obtained 10.09.2024.

## Educational attainment

2.10 Census 2021 data indicates that 18.1% of people in Saxmundham parish aged 16 and over have no qualifications which has reduced from 25 % in 2011. This compares to 19.4% for East Suffolk and 19.7% for Suffolk.

## Employment

2.11 Data from the 2021 Census shows that 52.7% of residents aged 16 years and over in Saxmundham parish are economically active and in employment including full time students. This is slightly higher than the percentage for East Suffolk district, and lower than the percentage for Suffolk.

Economic Activity Status	Saxmundham percentage	East Suffolk percentage	Suffolk percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Economically active: In employment (including full time students)	52.7%	51.5%	56.5%
Economically active: Unemployed (including full time students)	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%
Economically inactive	44.8%	45.9%	40.9%

Figure 14 above Saxmundham parish Economic Activity Census 2021. Source: Nomis website. Information obtained 09.09.2024).

2.12 Data from Census 2021 in respect of the occupations of all usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment is shown in the table below.

Occupation (current)	Saxmundham parish percentage	East Suffolk percentage	Suffolk percentage
Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the Census.	100%	100%	100%
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	12.5%	13%	12.6%
2. Professional occupations	14.1%	15.9%	16.7%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	12.3%	12.5%	13.1%

Occupation (current)	Saxmundham parish percentage	East Suffolk percentage	Suffolk percentage
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	8.9%	9.5%	9.4%
5. Skilled trades occupations	13.2%	12.5%	12.2%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	12.5%	10.6%	10.1%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	8.1%	8%	7.6%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	6.6%	7.7%	7.7%
9. Elementary occupations	11.7%	10.3%	10.6%

Figure 15 above: Table showing Census 2021 Occupation data for Saxmundham parish, East Suffolk district and Suffolk. Source: Nomis website. Information obtained 10.09.2024.

2.13 Data from the 2021 Census shows the industries in which Saxmundham parish residents are employed. The highest percentage of residents are employed in public administration, education and health, followed by distribution, hotels and restaurants.

2.14 Saxmundham residents do not travel long distances for work. The highest proportion of residents of Saxmundham parish travel less than 10km to work, followed by working from home.

### Deprivation levels

2.15 The 2021 Census reports that 46.9% of Saxmundham residents are not deprived using any of the deprivation indicators and a further 34% are deprived when scored against one indicator. These figures are almost identical to those for East Suffolk as whole and the area is not seen as particularly deprived.

## The local economy – jobs, businesses and shops

2.16 A survey<sup>3</sup> conducted for East Suffolk Council in 2019 found that there were 79 businesses operating in the town centre of which 43 were retail, including 2 national chain supermarkets. There were 12 food and drink establishments ranging from the Bell Hotel to restaurants, cafes, and takeaways. Seven businesses fall into the financial and professional services sector. There is a bank in the town centre. Although still relatively small, there is also a growing arts-connected sector plus galleries.

2.17 Within the rest of the town there are a number of small businesses, including garages, a care company, accountancy, hardware and engineering and carpet shops. There are numerous small businesses operating from residential properties. Just outside the plan area, Carlton Park Industrial Estate is home to a range of businesses providing employment and services for the town and wider area.

2.18 Despite its rural location and proximity to the coast, the town does not have a significant tourism economy. In Spring 2021, there were 11 properties in the town which were marketed as holiday lets, but there may well be more let on an informal basis. Camping and Caravan sites are located just outside the town, although within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Farming, which used to be a bedrock of the town, now employs a mere 3 per cent.

## Transport, movement and access

2.19 The town is by-passed by the A12. The former A12, now the B1121, runs through the town from north to south and intersects in the centre of the town with the B1119 to Framlingham (west) and Leiston (east), together they form the basis of the road network. The High Street section of the B1121 is very narrow at its northern point causing congestion at times and making servicing of the shops difficult. It is also particularly dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. The whole length of the High Street is characterised by narrow and uneven pavements. There is a traffic light-controlled junction with the Leiston Road (at Church Street). This junction is heavily used as it gives access to the two supermarkets on Church Street and at busy times of the day it can become

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<sup>3</sup> 'Saxmundham, Understanding the Heart of Our Town, Town Centre Baseline Report September 2019', <https://eastsuffolkmeansbusiness.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Saxmundham-Heart-of-Our-Town-Report-September-2019.pdf>



congested. There is a zebra crossing facilitating pedestrian movement between the supermarkets and nearby shops.

2.20 The B1119 snakes its way through residential areas of the town and does not provide a clear east- west route, to the confusion of visitors to the town. In practice, much of the east-west-bound traffic uses the traffic-light controlled junction with the B1121 to use Chantry Road (very narrow at the junction) as the main route to or from the west. The railway station, although centrally situated in the town, has been described as 'geographically challenged'. The access routes, Station Approach, New Cut and Albion Street, are very narrow and involve tight turns making it difficult for larger vehicles and buses which need to serve the station.

2.21 Cycling is challenging in and into the centre of town mainly because of narrow roads, absence of earmarked routes, parked cars and heavy traffic at times. There are cycle racks at the supermarkets, the station and at the north end of the High Street. Cycling out of the centre towards the surroundings villages is dangerous because of fast traffic and a lack of dedicated cycle lanes or cycle tracks.

2.22 In general, the pavements in the older parts of the town are very narrow and walking two abreast is not possible, this is a particular problem in the centre of town where there is more pedestrian movement and where more space is needed for people to be able to interact socially. Those with mobility issues are also disadvantaged by the narrow and often uneven pavements.

2.23 Outside the town there are public footpaths and other Public Rights of Way, out into the countryside, these are mainly to the west and involve crossing the A12, which is hazardous, given the speed of traffic. The parish also features in the East Suffolk Line Walks, a series of promoted long-distance trails between railway stations between Ipswich and Lowestoft.

2.24 The town has a central car park with long stay spaces and short stay free spaces and disabled spaces; it operates a pay and display charging system. The two supermarkets have car parks; both operate on the basis of free parking for the first 2 hours. There is free short stay on-street parking in the Market Place and at the north end of the High Street. The station has a pay and display car park for railway users only.

## Social, cultural, community and leisure

2.25 The largest meeting place and events venue in the town is the Market Hall which can seat 200. The Fromus Centre has relocated to Street Farm Road and has become the main community centre. In addition, the Gannon Rooms, the Old Bank and the two church halls are used for a variety of leisure and social groups. The Social Club is a meeting place for its members. Informal socialising takes place in the cafes and bars in the town.

2.26 The Museum and the Library are important to the cultural life of the town. The Art Station, housed in two town centre locations, including the former telephone exchange, is developing as a significant local centre for the arts and creative industries.

2.27 The town now only has a primary school. The primary school is close to capacity in terms of pupil numbers. The secondary school closed in 2024 and the future of the site is yet to be determined.

2.28 Medical services are provided by the GP surgery, a dentist, an optician, and the pharmacy. There are several residential homes for the elderly, a sheltered housing complex and mental health services.

2.29 Leisure activities are provided by a large number of clubs and societies. Outdoor sport takes place at Carlton Park. The Memorial Field includes a skate park and there are several children's playgrounds around the town.

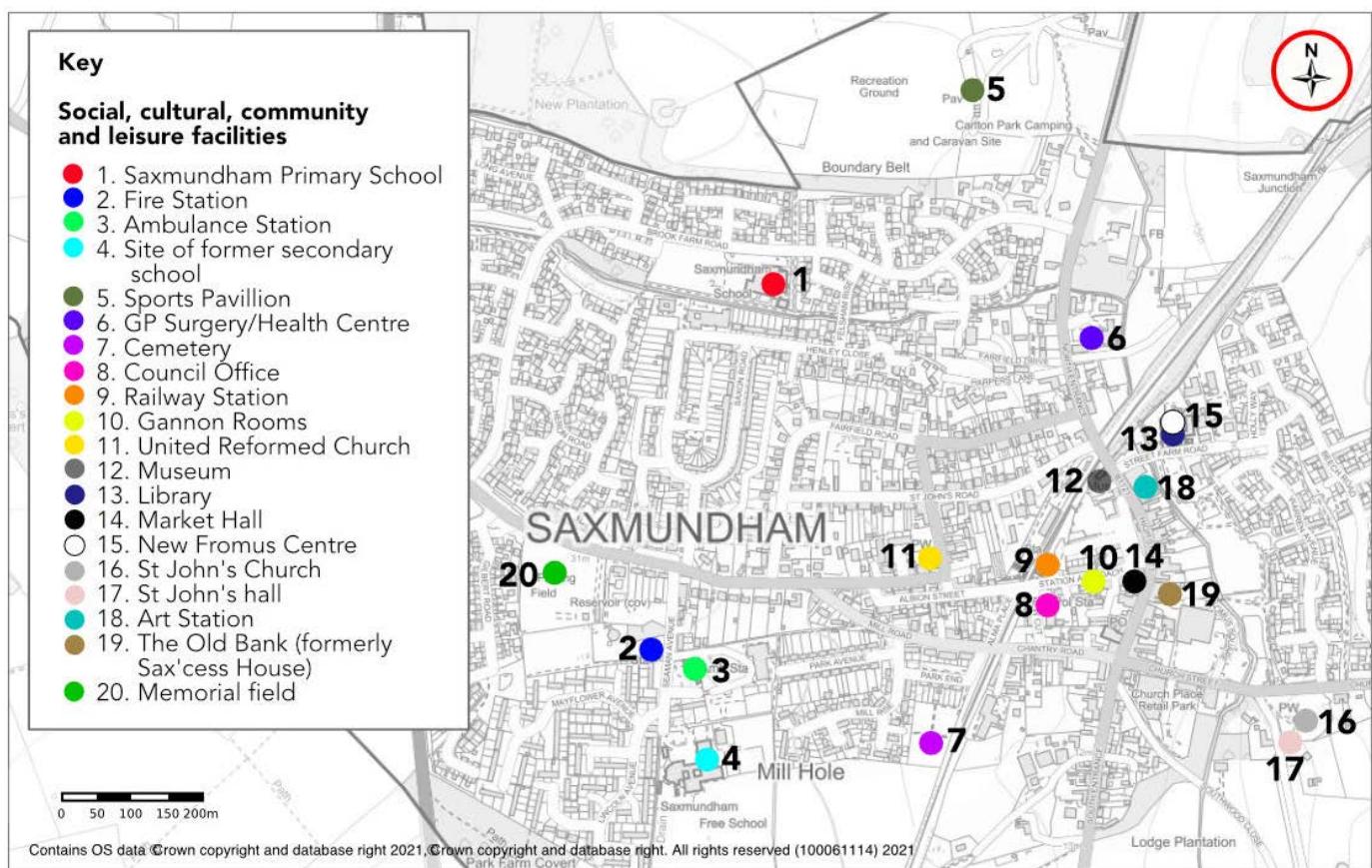


Figure 16: Location of social, cultural, community and leisure facilities (source: parish online, with own annotations).

## Built heritage

2.30 The town originally grew up to the west of the River Fromus and developed in a linear form along the turnpike, which was the main road from London to Lowestoft. The town was granted a market in 1272, signifying its importance as a market town serving the surrounding agricultural and rural area, a function which it still fulfils. The buildings in the centre of town are mainly 16th, 17th and 18th century. With the coming of the railway the town expanded westwards largely in the form of typical Victorian brick-built terraces. The construction of the by-pass in the 1980s has led to large scale residential development between the existing town and the by-pass. More recent development has extended the town eastwards to the skyline.

2.31 The approach to the town from the south along the B1121 is spacious, it is flanked by The Layers to the west and Hurts Hall Park to the east with views across to Hurts Hall itself and the church. The town sits below the rising land to the east. The approach from the north is wooded and enclosed and opens out

on arrival at the built-up area. Approaching on the B1119 Leiston Road from the east, the town is not visible until the boundary when the road dips down towards the Fromus, and there are glimpses of the roofs of the town ahead. From the west the approach from the by-pass is unremarkable.

2.32 Saxmundham Conservation Area covers the historic heart of the town and includes most of the land between the River Fromus and the railway and extends north of the railway bridge to include Fairfield House and Langley Manor. Saxmundham boasts 50 listed buildings, most of which are in the town centre. St John's Church is listed grade II\* as is The Beeches at 5, North Entrance.

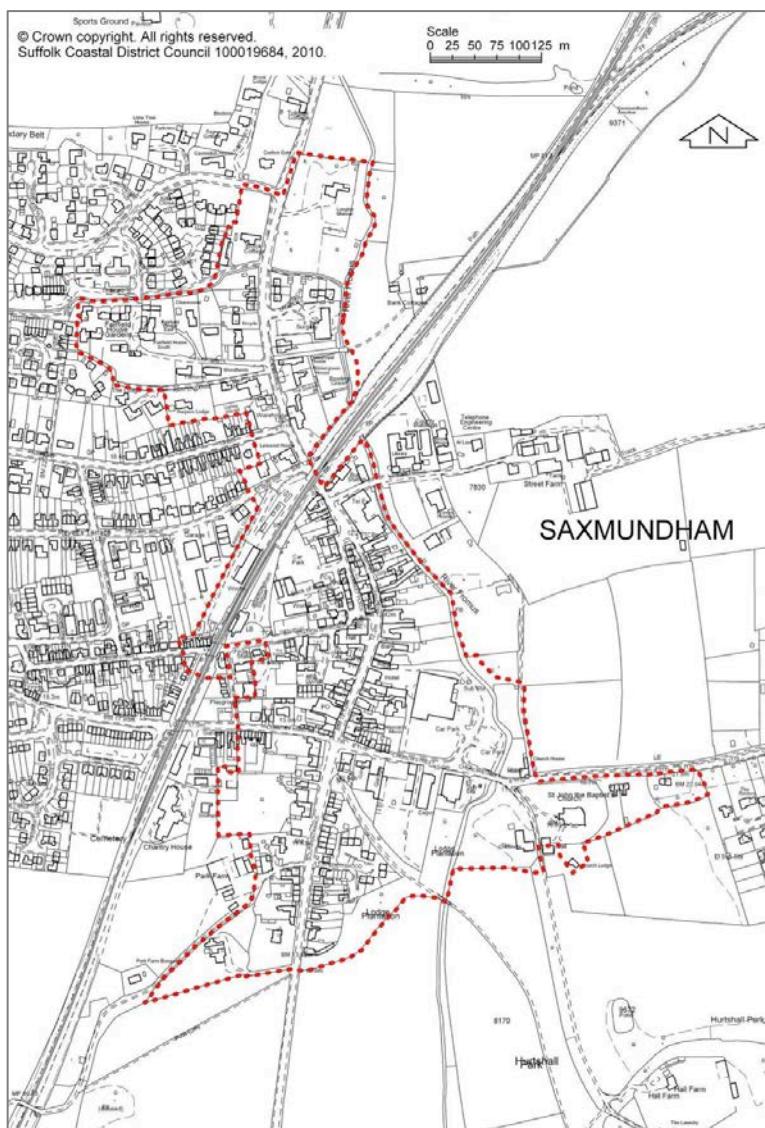


Figure 17: Saxmundham Conservation Area (source: East Suffolk Council, Saxmundham Conservation Area Appraisal, March 2016).

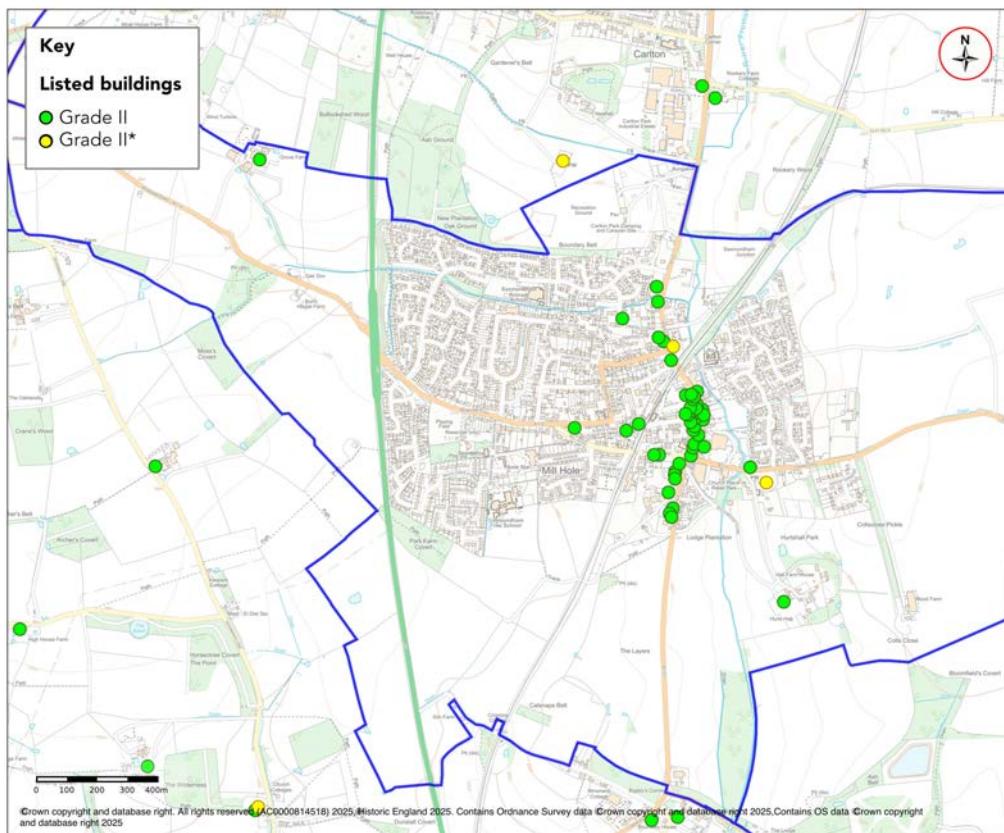


Figure 18  
below: Listed buildings in Saxmundham parish (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary

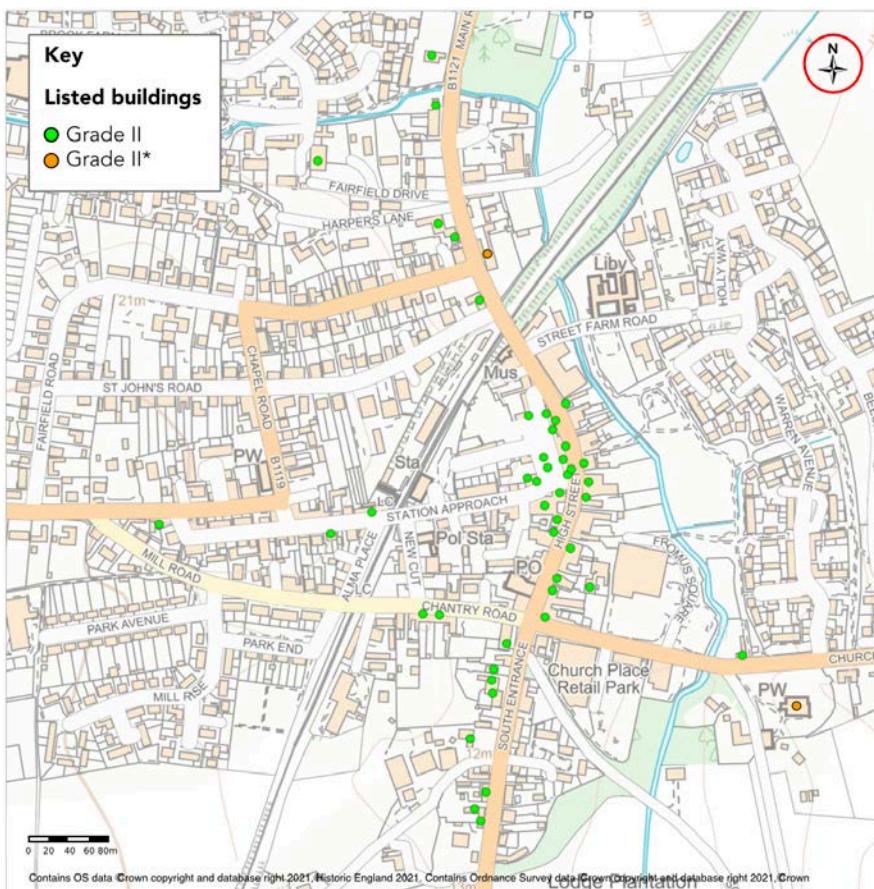


Figure 19: Listed buildings in Saxmundham town centre (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

## Archaeology

2.33 Information on the archaeology within the parish is held within the County held Historic Environment Record (HER), which is maintained by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS). Of particular note have been the archaeological investigations at Land East of Warren Hill, Saxmundham which revealed evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon settlement. The archaeological evidence recorded included a significant phase of Saxon activity which included a large rectangular post-build structure representing a hall, two additional post-built structures and nine sunken feature buildings. Furthermore, evidence for Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age occupation and further Iron age and Saxon settlement has also been identified in the vicinity. Further information on the archaeology of the parish can be found on the Suffolk Heritage Explorer.<sup>4</sup>

## Natural environment and green spaces

2.34 There are no designated nature conservation sites within the parish, however the parish is in relatively close proximity to the extremely sensitive Sandlings, Alde-Ore and Minsmere-Walberswick Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Saxmundham is situated in an area which has several road links to areas of open countryside and the coast. However, it only has a few open green spaces in the town centre and several smaller green spaces that create an open setting within the more recently developed housing estates. There are also footpath links to Carlton Park to the north which, although not wholly within the boundary of Saxmundham, is used by its residents. With the planned expansion of the town, it is necessary to safeguard existing green space and increase it for the benefit of the community.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/>





## 3. How the Plan was prepared

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- 3.1 The Modified Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a Steering Group consisting of a mix of Town Councillors and local residents. Many of the Steering Group members had been involved with the preparation of the 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan and were therefore familiar with the process. The Steering Group were supported by a small team of independent consultants. The process of the review began in August 2024.
- 3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Review is commissioned by Saxmundham Town Council. The funding for its production has come from a central government Locality grant and the Town Council's own funding.

### Community engagement and consultation

- 3.3 The original Neighbourhood Plan was preprepared following considerable community engagement, details of which was set out in the Consultation Statement which accompanied it. The process employed for this Modified Neighbourhood Plan has been shorter than that for the original Neighbourhood Plan which is consistent with its more focused scope. The key issues of the Garden Neighbourhood and the Energy Infrastructure Projects were identified at an early stage by the Town Council and the community.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the Garden Neighbourhood was a significant issue for the made Neighbourhood Plan and that the Submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan contained specific policies for the Garden Neighbourhood which were removed in part by the Examiner as they related to land which was then outside of the Neighbourhood Area. These had been the subject of considerable public consultation both with stakeholders and the local community. This Modified Neighbourhood Plan draws heavily on that original work.

### Communication

- 3.5 Communicating with local residents and businesses has been a key consideration particularly as the Adopted Neighbourhood Plan is relatively recent. It has been important to explain to the community that the purpose of the Modified Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure that there are effective and

clear planning policies guiding the development of the Garden Neighbourhood and opportunities for mitigating the impacts of the Energy Infrastructure Projects affecting the parish.

- 3.6 The Garden Neighbourhood is expected to be delivered during the Neighbourhood Plan period and there has been engagement with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the community and the Town Council by the promoters of the site. Further engagement in the production of the required Masterplan is expected to continue. The challenge for the Modified Neighbourhood Plan is to effectively communicate that it is seeking to manage the development of the site to gain maximum benefits for the community and is not a mechanism for stopping or preventing the development of the site, the principle of which was established through the Local Plan allocation. There have been regular updates on the progress of the Modified Neighbourhood Plan to Town Council meetings, the Neighbourhood Plan Facebook Page and articles in the local press.
- 3.7 The Pre-Submission consultation on the Modified Neighbourhood Plan took place between 27<sup>th</sup> June and 15<sup>th</sup> August. The consultation was launched with two drop-in style exhibitions held at the Market Hall on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June (between 4pm and 8pm) and Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June (between 10am and 2pm). A physical copy of the Plan was available in the Saxmundham Library and the Town Council offices. A weblink to the Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents was also sent to the prescribed statutory consultees and a wide range of local organisations. More details are set out in the Consultation Statement.

EAST ANGLIAN  
DAILY TIMES

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DAILY TIMES

**S'MUNDHAM:  
TOWN'S  
FUTURE IN  
SPOTLIGHT**

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**WEDNESDAY**



# 4. Vision and objectives

## A Vision for Saxmundham (to 2036)

4.1 The vision for the Modified Neighbourhood Plan remains the same as that in the made Neighbourhood Plan and is set out below.

VISION 2036

### A thriving and prosperous town

- which acts as a key service centre and transport hub for the town and surrounding area
- with the physical and community infrastructure to support growth
- with new and varied employment opportunities, including in new and growing sectors, which take advantage of the connections offered by rail and the A12
- with a vibrant and viable town centre and a bustling weekly market, with strong retail, cultural, energy and hospitality sectors
- and adequate and convenient parking provision.

### A safe and healthy town

- with good social, cultural and leisure provision contributing to the health and wellbeing of all ages
- with well used green open spaces and an enhanced network of green infrastructure providing access to nature and improvements to biodiversity
- with ease of movement throughout the town
- with safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- with good quality housing which meets the current and future needs of residents
- enjoying enhanced medical and educational facilities, which support healthy lifestyles
- where services and employment choices are local.



**An attractive and distinctive town**

- which is friendly and inclusive
- where new and existing development is successfully integrated forming a holistic and sustainable community
- which has a strong, wide-ranging cultural identity with well-equipped public venues and programmes of events and activities
- with a well maintained and valued historic town centre, enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

4.2 The vision is underpinned by the objectives and policies of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan and is referred to throughout.

4.3 From the vision flow the different objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and from there, the policies. The diagram below outlines this relationship.



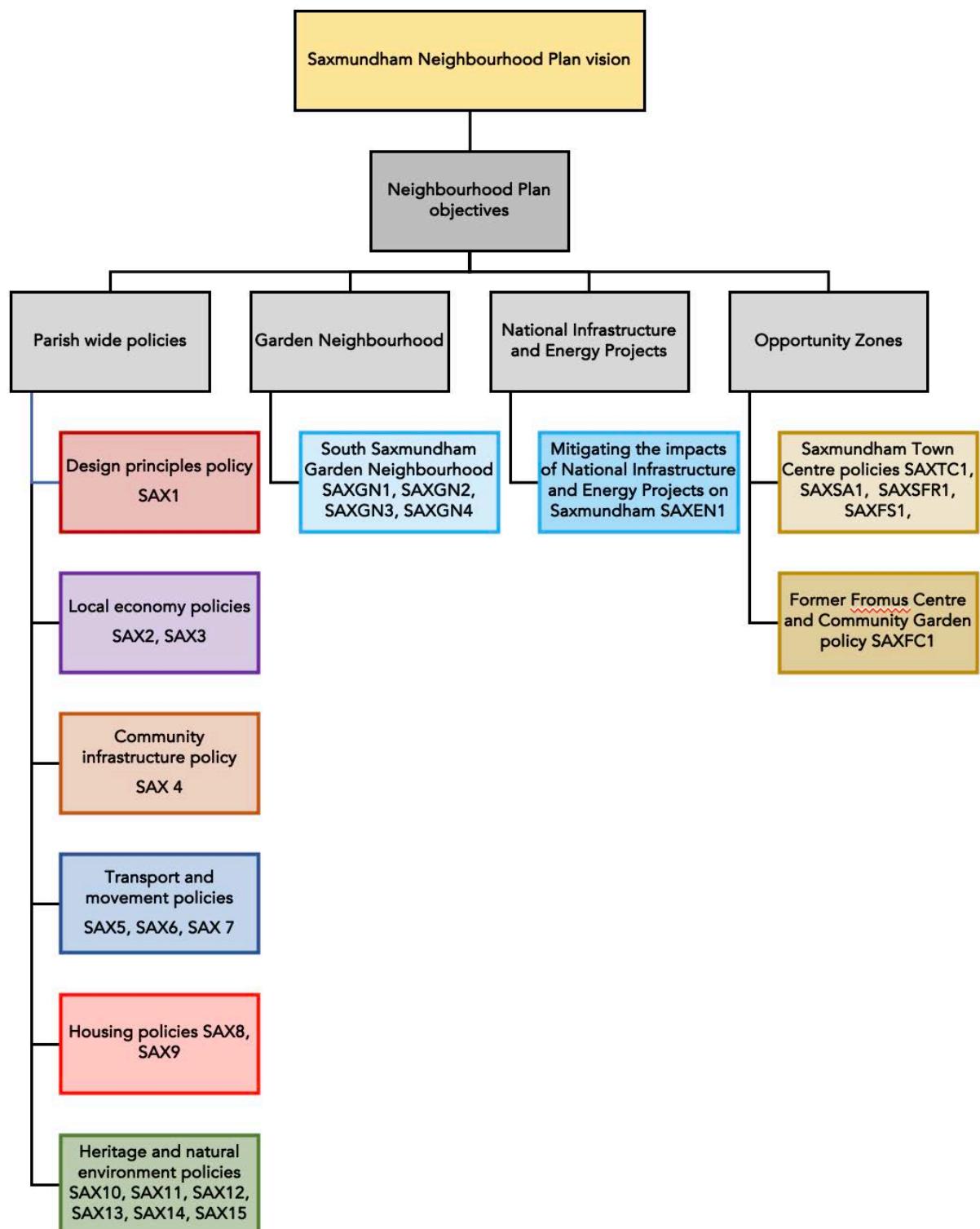


Figure 20: Structure of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan

4.4 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are broad statements of intent which are there to help deliver the vision and link to the issues that Saxmundham is seeking to address. They have been drafted using themes

picked up at an early stage and have been refined through the community consultation exercises. The Neighbourhood Plan Review adds new objectives relating to the Garden Neighbourhood and to Energy Infrastructure Projects.

## Area wide Objectives

**Objective 1:** To promote a strong and diverse forward looking, local economy, building upon the town's advantages as a service centre market town with a strategic location.

**Objective 2:** To secure for the community of Saxmundham a full range of physical and community infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the town and its environs.

**Objective 3:** To improve transport and safe accessibility for the people of Saxmundham by foot, bicycle, mobility scooter and public or private transport, resulting in environmental and health benefits.

**Objective 4:** To promote the development of high quality, energy efficient housing to meet the needs of the people of Saxmundham.

**Objective 5:** To protect and enhance the Conservation Area, the town's heritage, green spaces, natural features and rural setting, and to address the challenges of climate change.

## South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood

**Objective SSGN1:** To create a high quality, well designed, distinctive development in line with modern 'Garden City' principles which is valued by its residents and recognised as an asset to the town.

**Objective SSGN2:** To successfully integrate – physically, environmentally, and socially – the new neighbourhood with the existing town and community of Saxmundham.



## National Infrastructure and Energy Projects

**Objective EN1:** To ensure that the necessary measures required to mitigate the physical, visual and social impacts of National Infrastructure and Energy Projects on Saxmundham are identified and implemented.

**Opportunity Zone Objectives:** Saxmundham town centre (including High Street, station area, Street Farm Road and Fromus Square)

**Objective STC1:** To create an attractive and welcoming town centre with space to gather and socialise, with a pedestrian friendly environment stretching from the station to Fromus Square and along the length of the High Street.

**Objective STC2:** To reduce the non-essential use of the High Street by motor vehicles and to prioritise pedestrian movement and safety in the centre, whilst improving and encouraging parking provision in accessible locations within walking distance of the town centre.

**Objective STC3:** To protect and enhance the historic core of the town as defined by the Conservation Area.

**Objective STC4:** To support the economic and environmental regeneration of the station area via a masterplan led approach, which encourages mixed-use development of underused and derelict land, and improves the attractiveness of Station Approach as a route for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Opportunity Zone Objectives:** The former Fromus Centre and Community Garden

**Objective FFC1:** To support a high-quality development for specialist and other housing purposes including community use, which safeguards the community garden, and offers improved pedestrian access to, and permeability within, the site.

# 5. Planning policies

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## Introduction to policies

- 5.1 The vision and objectives have provided the framework to develop the policies in the Modified Neighbourhood Plan. Each policy relates to a particular objective under the following five area wide themes: the local economy; community, social and recreation provision; transport and movement; housing and heritage; and the natural environment. In addition, there are zonal policies for the identified Opportunity Zones, for the town centre, station area, Street Farm Road, Fromus Square and the former Fromus Centre. The Opportunity Zones are not intended to be site specific allocations but indicative areas within which specific proposals and actions will be encouraged. The Modified Neighbourhood Plan adds specific policies relating to the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood and for mitigating the impacts of proposed Major Energy Related Infrastructure projects.
- 5.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document for planning purposes. All policies in the Plan have been derived from a series of consultation exercises, stakeholder engagement and desk research, which provide the justification and evidence base for their selection.
- 5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the government's guidance. They exist to:
  - Set out locally led requirements in advance for new development in the parish.
  - Inform and guide decisions on planning applications.
  - Ensure that the multitude of individual decisions add up to something coherent for the area as a whole<sup>5</sup>.
- 5.4 To aid interpretation for decision makers and planning applicants, each policy is accompanied by supporting text, which includes context for the theme, the views of residents, guidelines and reference to strategic plans. This is set out before each of the policies.

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<sup>5</sup> Tony Burton, Writing Planning Policies, Locality.

## Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan policies

### Parish wide: **Design principles**

SAX1: General design principles

### Parish wide: **Local economy**

SAX2: Expansion of existing businesses

SAX3: New businesses

### Parish wide: **Community infrastructure**

SAX4: New community facilities

### Parish wide: **Transport and movement**

SAX5: Improving connectivity

SAX6: Public rights of way

SAX7: Parking provision

### Parish wide: **Housing**

SAX8: Windfall and Infill development

SAX9: Tenure blind Housing Development

### Parish wide: **Heritage and natural environment**

SAX10: Historic town centre and Conservation Area

SAX11: Non-designated Heritage Assets

SAX12: Gateways, views and landscape setting of Saxmundham

SAX13: Protection and enhancement of natural assets

SAX14: Community gardens and allotments

SAX15: Protection of existing Local Green Spaces

### **South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood**

SAXGN1: Connecting the Garden Neighbourhood

SAXGN2: Green infrastructure

SAXGN3: Community Facilities

SAXGN4: Design of the Garden Neighbourhood

### **Mitigating the impacts of National Infrastructure and Energy Projects**

SAXEN1: Addressing and mitigating the impacts of large scale energy projects

### **Opportunity Zone: Saxmundham town centre**

SAXTC1: Town centre overarching strategy

SAXSA1: Station area



SAXSFR1: Development and environmental enhancement opportunities at Street Farm Road  
SAXFS1: Fromus Square

**Opportunity Zone: Former Fromus Centre and Community Garden**

SAXFC1: Former Fromus Centre site and Community Garden



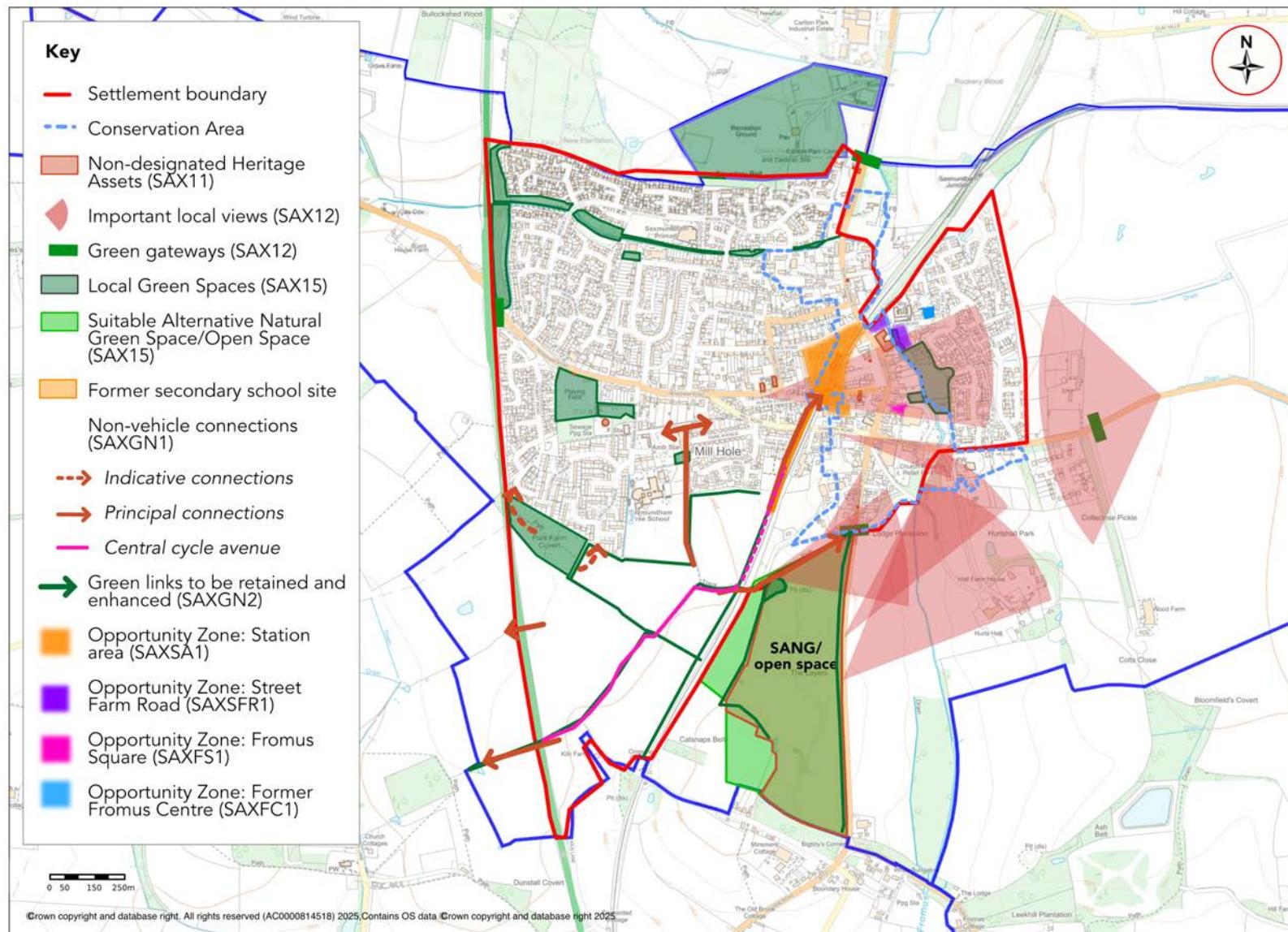


Figure 21: Composite policies map (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Please refer to individual policy maps for more detail.



## 6. Parish wide: Design principles

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### High quality design

- 6.1 Among the key determinants of whether any new development, irrespective of scale or use, is successful is how well it is considered to integrate with its surroundings. Matters such as design, materials, form and massing, the impact on local character, layout and scale are the most common issues that will cause the local community concerns about any proposed new development.
- 6.2 If a community believes that it has been involved in and been able to influence the design of a development at an early stage, the higher the likelihood that the development will be considered to be acceptable.
- 6.3 Whilst to an extent design and impact on local character are subjective judgments, these can be influenced by breaking design elements down into component parts and attempting to address them. Whether a proposed new development is acceptable and appropriate and relates well to its surroundings, is one of the most common judgments to be made, yet there is often very little evidence or guidance to assist local people (or decision makers) in making that judgement.
- 6.4 A key purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not only to help influence the designers and proposers of development at an early stage of formulating their proposals, but also to help promote an understanding of what elements make up the character of the area and what constitutes good design that respects local character.
- 6.5 Government guidance places considerable emphasis on achieving well-designed places and this has been reinforced in the most recent revision of the

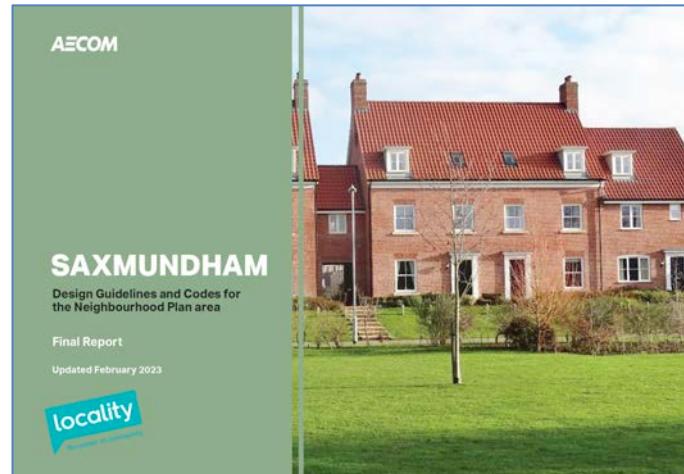
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF describes it as fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work, and helps make development proposals acceptable to communities. Effective engagement between applicants, communities and local planning authorities is essential.

- 6.6 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states 'Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.' Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and how they should be reflected in development.
- 6.7 In addition, the NPPF makes clear that local planning authorities should ensure that visual tools such as design codes and guides are used to inform development proposals to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and reflect local character and preferences. They should provide a framework for creating high-quality places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design to inform development proposals. It also makes clear that the level of detail and degree of prescription within design codes and guides should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.
- 6.8 Design coding is one tool available to local planning authorities, communities, and developers to define and deliver design quality, in addition to design guides, planning briefs, heritage characterisation studies, standards and masterplans as set out in the NPPF and planning practice guidance. A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area.
- 6.9 The government is heavily advocating the use of design codes and expects all local planning authorities to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and which reflect local character and design preferences.
- 6.10 The Town Council commissioned consultants AECOM to produce Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area to support the made Neighbourhood Plan. This work was completed in July 2021 and is contained



in **Appendix E** of this Modified Neighbourhood Plan. The Design Code reflected a detailed analysis of the local character of the parish, developed some strategic design guidelines and identified a palette of materials which should influence the design of future development. The Code's principles have informed and are reflected in **Policy SAX1**, and its more detailed guidance should be drawn upon as appropriate in the design of future development, throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area. In addition, the report provided specific guidance to be used by the Town Council when assessing and responding to consultation in future planning applications for new development.

Figure 22: Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan area (Appendix E).



- 6.11 The Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey conducted in June 2019 asked residents for their views on which design elements they considered to be important in future developments. 889 people responded to this question and 2107 preferences were expressed. The most supported concepts were 'highly energy efficient' (79 per cent of respondents) and 'landscaping of high visual and ecological quality' (57 per cent). In relation to house building style, 43 per cent express support for 'Traditional Suffolk', 18 per cent for 'Innovative design' and some support also for 'dementia friendly', 12 per cent. Further information on dementia friendly design can be found in the Royal Town Planning Institute Guide.<sup>6</sup>
- 6.12 Given the increasing importance that both local people and national Government are placing on design, it is considered that achieving well designed places and promoting high quality design should also be fundamental to this Neighbourhood Plan and go to its heart. The Plan therefore sets out its key design principles at the beginning of the policies

<sup>6</sup> RTPI | Dementia and Town Planning: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2020/september/dementia-and-town-planning/>



section, recognising that good design should be a theme that flows throughout the plan, and sets the tone for other policies to follow in terms of its importance for all new development of any scale, form or use. **Policy SAX1** below applies throughout the amended Neighbourhood Area.

6.13 Suffolk County Council has also produced a range of guidance which may be helpful to prospective applicants when designing their proposals, These include:

- The Suffolk Design Streets Guide.
- Suffolk Guidance for Parking.
- The Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy, particularly Appendix A.

6.14 The criteria in the policy below are informed by the **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area (July 2021)**. It is important that new development is not viewed in isolation and consideration of design and layout should be informed by the wider context, considering not only the buildings immediately adjacent but also the townscape and landscape of the wider locality all of which will contribute to the character of the area. The pattern of streets, spaces, building styles and types, materials and the natural environment will all help to shape the character and identity of a development, of any scale. Proposals for new development should take full account of the local context and innovative, eco-friendly and contemporary designs that add interest and embody the general 'sense of place' are encouraged. It should be noted that the General Design Principles identified in **Policy SAX1** below apply throughout the Neighbourhood Area including the area of the proposed South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood located within the extended Neighbourhood Area. More detailed design guidance for the development of the Garden Neighbourhood is contained in Chapter 12.



POLICY

## SAX1: General design principles

The design of all new development in Saxmundham should reflect the town's local distinctiveness and character and seek to enhance its quality.

Proposals should have regard to the advice contained within the Design Guidelines for the Neighbourhood Plan area as set out in **Appendix E**.

Proposals that incorporate eco-friendly, innovative or contemporary designs whilst respecting the architectural heritage and character of the area will be supported

Proposals for new development should accord with the following criteria, as appropriate:

- a. Respect the existing settlement pattern in order to preserve its character.
- b. Retain existing connections and ensure new connections integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks, as well as natural features such as tree groups, hedgerows, and public rights of way.
- c. Reinforce the established character of streets, greens, and spaces, where this provides a positive impact.
- d. Harmonise and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form and architecture.
- e. Retain existing natural and historic features within the new development.
- f. Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.
- g. Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details.
- h. Incorporate necessary services and drainage without causing harm to retained features.
- i. Ensure all component elements of a development, e.g., buildings, landscapes and access routes, parking, open space, are well related to each other.
- j. Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address health and well-being needs.

Consideration should be given to the specific guidance contained in the policies for the relevant Opportunity Zones. See also **Policy SAX10** which relate to the Conservation Area and **SAXGN4** which relates to the Garden Neighbourhood.





## 7. Parish wide: Local economy

**Objective 1: To promote a strong and diverse local economy, building upon the town's advantages as a service centre market town with a strategic location.**

### Employment in Saxmundham

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can expand and invest and adapt. Weight should be given to the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account local business needs. In rural areas planning policies should enable the sustainable growth of all types of business both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. The use of previously developed land and sites that are well related physically to existing settlement should be encouraged.
- 7.2 The Local Plan indicates that employment opportunities are limited in the town and that there is a high level of net out commuting for employment. A range of employment sites exist in close proximity to Saxmundham, but a significant proportion of residents travel for employment to locations such as Ipswich, Martlesham, Leiston and Lowestoft. Policy SCLP12.28 of the Local Plan which contains the Strategy for the town also refers to the need to diversify and expand employment opportunities.
- 7.3 The creation of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood will provide new opportunities for employment in the area, including in the employment area to the west of the A12, which was previously outside of the parish

boundary. It will be important to ensure that this significant new site offers opportunities for new employment and does not have adverse impacts on the town centre economy. Its design and uses should be compatible with its inclusion within the Garden Neighbourhood.

7.4 The largest identified employment site is located just outside the Neighbourhood Area to the north of the town in the parish of Kelsale-cum-Carlton. This may be the reason that employment as an issue did not feature particularly strongly in the results of the Household Survey, where most comments relating to jobs and business tended to refer to the town centre. However, a strong theme was the need to do more for younger people in the town both in terms of employment and training opportunities but also social and recreational provision. The area known as the Carlton Industrial Estate (SCLP12:36) is expanding with planning consents already permitted or recently approved for an additional 97,000 square feet/ 9012 square metres which equals approximately 150-160 jobs for the local area. The site consists of a range of uses and sizes. Given the connectivity of the site with access to and from Saxmundham this development is expected to make a positive impact on employment in Saxmundham.

7.5 The Neighbourhood Plan also does not propose to make any traditional additional allocations for employment or business uses but where proposals for such uses as identified above come forward, they would be encouraged to existing areas insofar as room is available. The locational focus for new employment generation for the Neighbourhood Plan will be the existing built-up area of the town, the town centre and specific locations where there are areas of unused or underused land that lend themselves to commercial and mixed developments such as the station area or Street Farm Road (see also the **Opportunity Zones policies**).

7.6 In addition the Neighbourhood Plan will support the appropriate expansion of existing businesses, particularly where such proposals will strengthen the economy of the town either by retaining or increasing the number of jobs, where they increase the overall vitality and viability of the town and where they provide sustainable jobs and skills for younger people.

**POLICY**

**SAX2: Expansion of existing businesses**

Proposals for the expansion or intensification of existing businesses (including otherwise acceptable changes of use) especially those which retain or increase the number of jobs, and provide skills development particularly those for young people will be permitted where:

- a. They strengthen the economy of the town, particularly the town centre and station area, and
- b. They do not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the area or the amenity of local residents, for example, through their design, impact upon amenity or highway safety issues caused by traffic generated.

**New business**

7.7 The Local Plan policies provide a clear steer on the need to diversify and expand the existing employment base in the town for the benefit of its existing young people but also the resident population more generally.

7.8 Consideration has been given to the potential for attracting new sectors of business e.g. the energy sector which already has a presence in the area thus broadening the employment base of the town and to building on those industries that already have a presence in the town but would benefit the town by increasing their impact (e.g. the growing arts/digital sector or specialist retail).

7.9 Successive revisions to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended<sup>7</sup> during 2019 and 2020, have meant that planning permission is no longer required to move from certain uses to others, such as employment uses to retail, or offices to houses, thereby resulting in a more limited scope for this area of planning policy.

7.10 The desire still exists to ensure that settlements that act as a focus for their surrounding rural hinterland and serve a key role in meeting the needs of its residents can still provide the range and depth of employment, cultural and retail opportunities that will enable them to continue to be attractive places to live and work and to thrive economically into the future. Therefore the

<sup>7</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1987/764/contents/made>.



Neighbourhood Plan contains the following policies aimed at protecting and retaining existing employment uses insofar as is possible within the framework provided by the Use Classes Order, but also those that enable mixed uses including employment, commercial and housing to come forward on key sites in order to safeguard and diversify the business base of the town and promote opportunities for regeneration and renewal. Support is given for a range of potential employment sectors including those relating to retail, hospitality and creative and cultural industries. The policy expresses a preference for locating new business uses in the Town Centre, re-using brownfield sites, existing or allocated sites before unallocated out of centre or edge of settlement sites will be considered. This is consistent with the approach taken in Adopted Local Plan Policy SCLP4.2.

**POLICY**

**SAX3: New businesses**

Development proposals which enable the establishment and growth of new businesses including small and medium sized enterprises particularly those within the following types, will be supported:

- a. Retail and hospitality.
- b. Traditional service industries.
- c. The energy sector (renewable energy, green energy, and carbon neutral energy) and those businesses associated with supporting those sectors.
- d. Creative and cultural industries, including those that combine modern technology and the arts.
- e. Digital industries.
- f. Health, social care, and community support services.<sup>8</sup>

Wherever possible, development proposals for business or mixed uses within the parish should be located in the town centre, the station area, Street Farm Road, or existing or allocated employment sites before out of centre or edge of settlement sites will be considered (see **Opportunity Zone policies**).

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix D: Glossary for more specific definitions of terms used in criteria a to f.





## 8. Parish wide: Community infrastructure

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**Objective 2: To secure for the community of Saxmundham a full range of physical and community infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the town and its environs.**

### Vibrant, healthy and integrated communities

- 8.1 The overarching social objective of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support the health, social and cultural well-being of communities.
- 8.2 In order to achieve this, planning of new development must go hand in hand with planning for the community services and facilities that need to be in place to support development and meet the needs of residents. This includes green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, footways and cycleways, public transport, education, library provision, allotments, fire hydrant provision, health services and a range of cultural facilities. These together are often described as 'community infrastructure'. Housing and other development will be expected to contribute towards improving local services and infrastructure through either the payment of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); planning

obligations (via a Section 106 agreement/Section 278 agreement); or use of a planning condition.

- 8.3 The NPPF requires that the levels and types of infrastructure required to support growth should be set out clearly in strategic policies e.g., the Local Plan.
- 8.4 Presently Saxmundham is relatively well served by community infrastructure although there are some elements of fragility and gaps in provision. This infrastructure is also extensively used by the surrounding parishes. There is a primary school, a doctors' surgery, library, dentist, vets, supermarkets, local shops, a bank, garage, restaurants, takeaway restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs, community meeting venues, places of worship, day care facilities, play areas, and car parks. Saxmundham does not, on the other hand, benefit from an indoor sports centre, allotments, cinema etc. so its social infrastructure is more limited than most other towns in the area. However, as the population of the parish increases over the Neighbourhood Plan period, a number of these current services are either at or nearing capacity and will therefore require consideration as to how they will continue to serve the community without a significant decrease in the quality of service they provide. Therefore, with all the proposed growth in the Garden Neighbourhood and the development to the north-east of Street Farm, there will be a need for new, improved, or reconfigured facilities, in order to at least maintain the quality of life for the whole community. This is particularly the case in relation to local GP/medical services given the foreseen level of population increase.
- 8.5 As well as giving consideration to the potential for new community facilities it is important that the existing valued facilities in the town which have served the community over time continue to perform their relevant community function. Such facilities should be safeguarded and protected from development proposals that would lead to their loss or would adversely affect their ability to function as community facilities.
- 8.6 With the majority of future growth in Saxmundham taking place within the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, some consideration to future community infrastructure requirements has been given at a strategic level. This is covered in more detail in **Chapter 12**.



## Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

8.7 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008, to help deliver the infrastructure required to support the development of an area. The CIL is levied on practically all new development within a given area. East Suffolk Council has introduced CIL across its administrative area and has an adopted CIL Charging Schedule which sets out the charges levied on various forms of development. East Suffolk is responsible for levying and collecting the CIL payable and they retain 5% of the overall CIL collected in the District to administer the scheme.

8.8 **Neighbourhood CIL** is the percentage of the CIL that is payable to the parish or neighbourhood within which eligible development takes place. At present Saxmundham Town Council receives 25 per cent of the CIL levied on development in the original Neighbourhood Plan area by virtue of being covered by a made Neighbourhood Plan. Currently development in the extended Neighbourhood Area would only generate a 15% levy for the Town Council until this Modified Neighbourhood Plan is formally made and then this will rise to 25%. Saxmundham Town Council regularly reviews its priorities for spending the Neighbourhood CIL. In January 2022, after consultation, the following were agreed by the Town Council for Neighbourhood CIL expenditure on community infrastructure.

- Purpose 1: Improving access from new housing areas to the town centre for pedestrian and cyclists.
- Purpose 2: Enhancing children and young people's recreational facilities.
- Purpose 3: A more attractive successful town centre to meet the needs of the growing population.
- Purpose 4: Improving community, entertainment, and cultural facilities in the town.
- Purpose 5: Improving facilities for non-fossil fuel modes.
- Purpose 6: Developing new or improving existing open or green spaces for the community.
- Purpose 7: Developing sports and recreational facilities.

Specific projects are identified and developed from this set of purposes.

8.9 **District CIL** is the remaining percentage of CIL that goes into the District Infrastructure fund which is pooled and allocated to infrastructure projects that make the development in the area sustainable, e.g. extensions to schools and

health. This may be spent on infrastructure projects identified in the Local Plan's Infrastructure Delivery Framework, Neighbourhood Plans or through bids received.

8.10 Community consultation undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process identified the following priorities in respect of community facilities:

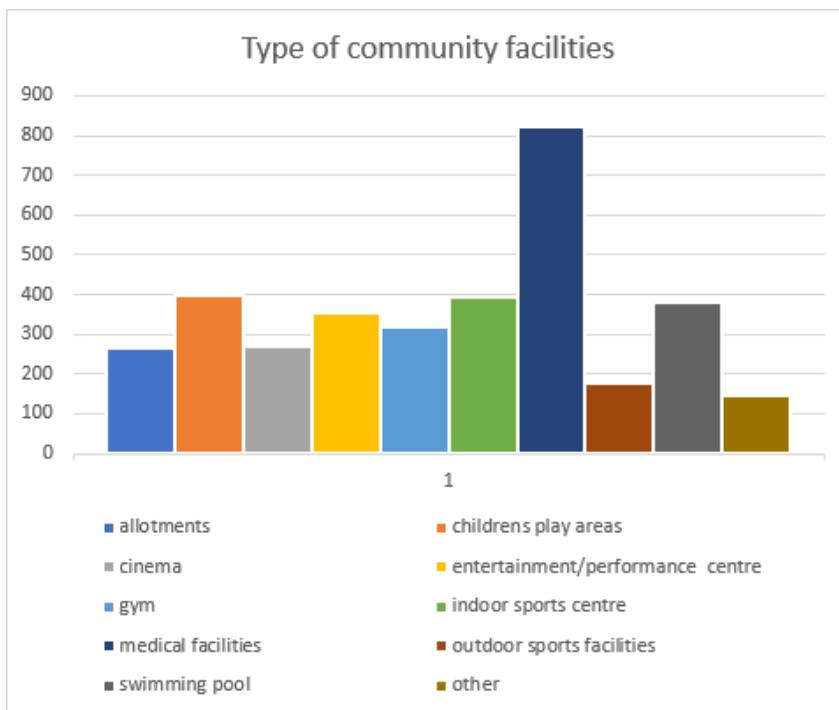


Figure 23:  
Community facilities  
identified as  
important through  
community  
consultation.

8.11 The top priority was medical facilities followed by the provision of an indoor sports facility which could also include outdoor sports provision, a gym and a swimming pool which were also identified as priorities for the community. The cost of provision of such facilities is too great to be provided through Neighbourhood CIL alone and therefore the use of other funding streams such as the District Level (pooled CIL contributions) will be required. Given that these facilities have been clearly and consistently identified as priorities by the community, the Town Council is extremely keen to ensure their delivery. The Town Council classes these as 'Essential Infrastructure' for the purposes of the District Council's CIL spending strategy. The Town Council will work closely in partnership with other bodies such as the District Council, County Council and the private sector, as appropriate, to enable the delivery of these facilities.

## Community facilities

8.12 A range of community facilities are highlighted in the Local Plan policy as needing to be delivered to support the growth of the Garden Neighbourhood. These are discussed in more detail in **Chapter 12**.

8.13 Community consultation undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process revealed that indoor sports provision was the key priority for a facility thought consistently to be lacking in the town and therefore the development of the Garden Neighbourhood should consider opportunities to provide such facilities where they can easily serve the new and existing communities. (See **Policy SAX4** below).

8.14 **Policy SAX4** below seeks to reflect the expressed preferences of the community. It expresses support for proposals that would lead to the direct provision of new or improved community facilities and sets out the priorities for those facilities, including whether they are essential or desirable for the purposes of the District's CIL funding strategy. whilst ensuring that such proposals are acceptable in terms of their impact upon amenity, the environment and in highways terms. The policy is in the form of an area wide policy in order to reflect the needs for new infrastructure generated by the incremental growth of the town and other allocations outside (as well as due to) the Garden Neighbourhood.

**POLICY**

**SAX4: New community facilities**

Development proposals for new or improved community facilities will be supported. This includes:

- i. Fully functioning indoor sport and leisure provision within the town.
- ii. A fuller range of local health services, for example, new or expanded health and social care facilities.
- iii. Entertainment and cultural facilities.
- iv. Improved social provision, particularly for the young and the socially isolated.

Proposals should:

- a. Be accessible by high quality walking and cycling links.
- b. Avoid or mitigate significant impacts on the amenity of surrounding residents.
- c. Enhance the local natural environment and avoid or mitigate significant detrimental impacts upon the local natural environment.
- d. Avoid severe impact to highway function or safety and mitigate any significant impacts to highway function or safety.

(See also **Policy SAX14** relating to community gardens and allotments and **Policy SAXGN3** relating to the Garden Neighbourhood).





## 9. Parish wide: Transport and movement

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### Strategic transport context

- 9.1 Saxmundham's strategic links are provided by the A12 to the west which provides road access to the town and much of the parish. The town has a railway station which provides good rail access on the East Suffolk Railway line providing passenger services to Ipswich and Lowestoft, from which onward connections can be made.
- 9.2 From the south, Saxmundham is primarily accessed by the B1121 'South Entrance' which provides an historic entrance to the town centre. It is at this end of the town that the proposed Garden Neighbourhood will be located. Vehicular access to the Garden Neighbourhood is expected to be from the west via the A12, and the creation of a new access point onto the existing road network. This access point will also serve the proposed employment area to be located west of the A12.
- 9.3 The household survey results revealed that 45 per cent of respondents used the train service and that they were largely satisfied with the service. A much lower percentage 16 per cent of respondents said they used the bus service and 56 per cent were dissatisfied with the service provided.
- 9.4 Rail users were also asked what improvements were required to the local train service. From 400 respondents, 147 identified the facilities at the train station itself as needing improvement and this was the most popular issue raised. Respondents were also asked about specific improvements with physical

improvements to the building itself, better catering facilities and improved waiting/seating area being the highest priorities.

- 9.5 Accessibility within the town itself for pedestrians and cyclists was also examined by the household survey with results revealing support for cycle routes, some pedestrianisation of the High Street, wider pavements and footpaths and cycle parking and storage.
- 9.6 As with many market towns, Saxmundham has its share of traffic issues. Congestion in the town centre can occur at peak times and when HGVs are delivering to town centre businesses. The historic core of the town can become difficult to navigate which is not unusual for a historic town whose original street pattern was designed to accommodate considerably less and substantially different traffic levels and transport modes. Some pavements cannot accommodate the requirements of mobility guidelines.
- 9.7 Whilst concerns over traffic congestion, speeding and unregulated parking are often issues of concern to local communities, the planning process and Neighbourhood Plans more specifically are limited in the ability to address many transport issues as their policies are only enacted where development occurs. Neighbourhood Plan policies therefore cannot address issues such as speeding, congestion, or nuisance parking where these are already existing problems, but may be able to influence such issues for the future and ensure that new development does not exacerbate existing problems or cause new ones.
- 9.8 Government guidance in respect of plan making and transport issues tends to focus on promoting sustainable transport. Plans are urged to consider at an early stage the impacts of development on transport networks, realise opportunities for improvement, promote walking and cycling and public transport use and ensure that any adverse impacts of traffic are mitigated. It is also acknowledged that the pattern of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.
- 9.9 The government advises that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, which can help to reduce congestions and emissions and improve air quality and public health.

**Objective 3: To improve transport and safe accessibility for the people of Saxmundham by foot, bicycle, mobility scooter and public or private transport resulting in environmental and health benefits.**

## Walking and cycling connectivity

9.10 Opportunities to encourage and facilitate the use of sustainable transport in particular walking and cycling should be maximised. Government guidance encourages development proposals to provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking. Suffolk County Council has produced a Green Access Strategy (2020-2030).<sup>9</sup> This strategy sets out the council's commitment to enhance public rights of way, including new linkages and upgrading routes where there is a need. The strategy also seeks to improve access for all and to support healthy and sustainable access between communities and services through development funding and partnership working. Furthermore since the 2023 Neighbourhood Plan was made, East Suffolk Council has adopted the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy. The strategy is available here:  
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/east-suffolk-cycling-and-walking-strategy/>

9.11 Such walking and cycling networks should be comprehensive and provide not only for recreational routes but also for meaningful routes that can realistically be used for commuting to work or school. In addition, new routes should connect to the existing network and be suitable for use by people with disabilities and reduced mobility. New cycling and pedestrian routes should be safe, secure, and attractive, maximise the scope for pedestrians and cyclists and respond to the character of the area and any relevant design standards. See Policy SAXGN1 for more detail on connecting the Garden Neighbourhood and Policy SAXTC1 for more detail on the town centre/High Street.

9.12 Opportunities for improving connectivity between the town centre and the railway station (for commuting/business and recreational purposes) and also the town centre and the river frontage (for recreational purposes) should be given high priority.

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<sup>9</sup> Suffolk Green Access Strategy, <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/suffolk-green-access-strategy-2020-2030.pdf>



POLICY

## SAX5: Improving connectivity

Over the Plan period, opportunities will be sought to make the town safer and more accessible, and to contribute to the health and well-being of residents, through the provision of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes, public rights of way and crossings, suitable for all users, in particular linking new and existing housing areas to the town centre and station. Development should maximise walking and cycling through its location and design.

New provision should be in the form of well-designed, attractive and safe to use routes (including appropriate lighting), and the enhancement of existing routes including making new connections and links where appropriate. New cycle linkages should be built to the standards set out in LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design.

Development that will improve connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and users with a mobility impairment, both within Saxmundham, and in and out of Saxmundham to neighbouring towns and villages will be supported in so far as it relates to works within the plan area.

New routes, including new public rights of way, should form a cohesive network for users and allow for access both within the town and also to the wider countryside, where opportunities should be taken to create green corridors capable of connecting with neighbouring villages. New developments will be supported where they provide, or contribute to safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre, to community facilities (schools, library etc) and also to the wider countryside.

Proposals that would improve connectivity between the town and the river frontage, including those that would provide for a comprehensive riverside walk, will be supported.

See also **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Code for the Neighbourhood Plan Area (Appendix E)**.

## Existing Public Rights of Way

9.13 The NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance Public Rights of Way and access, including taking opportunities to



provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails. Opportunities to improve facilities for walkers and cyclists in the parish would be supported.

9.14 Where development proposals are likely to affect an existing Public Right of Way, these should take account of its route and incorporate it into the overall layout of the scheme. Where this is not considered possible, this will need to be justified. Where Public Rights of Way may be unavoidably impacted or lost, appropriate diversions or new routes should be provided that are safe, equally accessible, and convenient for users.

9.15 Existing Public Rights of Way which are incorporated into new developments, including bridleways and footpaths, should be protected and enhanced. Enhancement can take the form of new routes, connections, improved surfaces and/or signage increasing access to the countryside and connectivity between communities.

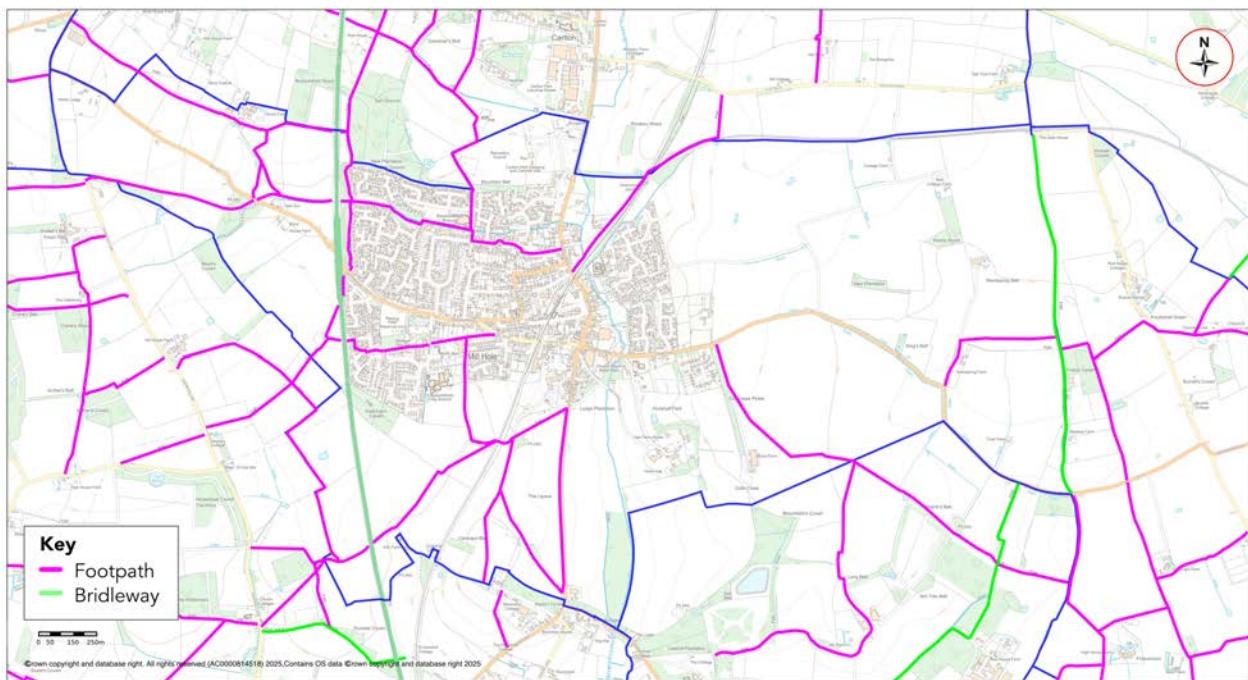


Figure 24: Public Rights of Way in Saxmundham parish (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

**POLICY****SAX6: Public Rights of Way**

Existing Public Rights of Way, including bridleways and footpaths, should be protected and enhanced to promote walking and cycling. Enhancement can take the form of new routes, connections, improved surfaces and/or signage increasing access to the countryside and connectivity between parts of the town.

Where new routes are to be provided and existing routes enhanced, careful consideration should be given to ensure their safety and attractiveness, for all users and for adjacent occupiers. Proposals should seek to minimise light pollution whilst remaining safe and attractive to users and be in accordance with Local Highway Authority (PRoW) guidance to meet current specifications for all user types.

Public Rights of Way should be retained, except where it can be demonstrated that there is strong community support for it to be re-routed. Where Public Rights of Way are to be unavoidably impacted or lost, appropriate diversions or new routes will be provided that are safe and convenient for users.

## Parking

- 9.16 Government guidance recognises that there continues to be a demand for parking in both residential and non-residential developments. The NPPF makes it clear that parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there are clear and compelling reasons for doing so that are necessary to manage the local road network. Parking provision for developments in East Suffolk will be made in order to satisfy the relevant adopted standards of East Suffolk Council as local planning authority.
- 9.17 Adequate and well-maintained parking provision is an important element of new development, whether it is for a single dwelling or for a major housing scheme or business premises. The Neighbourhood Plan encourages sustainable transport options, however, it is also a reality that private cars will be used to access services and employment either within or beyond the town.
- 9.18 Allocated parking in new residential development should discourage indiscriminate and on-kerb parking. As demand for electric vehicles is expected to increase over the plan period, opportunities should be taken to encourage

and require the installation of electric charging points both in residential and non-residential developments.

- 9.19 In larger housing developments, unless parking provision is well designed it can either dominate or detract from the overall visual appearance of that development. Where parking is to be provided it should be an integral part of the design and layout and it should also be designed to meet the needs of residents it is intended to serve. East Suffolk Council uses the Suffolk Guidelines for Parking, and these are therefore applicable within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 9.20 Whilst it is recognised that the use of cars for personal mobility will continue and therefore provision for parking is necessary, the principles of high-quality design and the creation of a safe, attractive and liveable environment is still paramount. Detailed consideration should be given to the provision of new parking, which should aim to be discreet and not dominate the design of development. The **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Code for the Neighbourhood Plan Area July 2021** provides useful guidance on the design of parking areas which the proposers of development are encouraged to follow.



**POLICY**

## **SAX7: Parking provision**

Parking provision (including cycle parking) for all new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area shall be in accordance with the adopted parking standards of Suffolk County Council.<sup>10</sup>

### **Residential parking**

Parking in new housing developments should be located to be discreet, accessible, and appropriate to both the character of the proposed development and the character of the existing area. New parking surfaces will be expected to use permeable materials to minimise the occurrence of flooding.

Taking into account the proposal and its location, individual parking provision should include adequate off-street parking for the size of the dwelling. Where garages are proposed they should be a minimum of 4.95m in length with a width of at least 2.9m in order to accommodate and provide easy access to and from a range of modern vehicles.

Where parking areas are proposed they should:

- i. Be located to promote natural surveillance and security.
- ii. Where appropriate, make specific provision for layby parking and visitor parking.
- iii. Be well designed, including landscaping between parking bays.
- iv. Safe and convenient for users, including appropriate lighting.

### **Non-residential parking**

Non-residential development including, commercial, retail and leisure development should provide adequate parking for the intended users of that development, including staff and customers to avoid creating parking problems such as parking on pavements and verges.

See also **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Code for the Neighbourhood Plan Area**. See also Policy SAXGN4.

<sup>10</sup> Parking guidance, Suffolk County Council, <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/parking-guidance/>





## 10. Parish wide: Housing

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### Scale and location of new housing

- 10.1 Government guidance advises that Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area. In addition, they should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans and should shape and direct development that is outside these strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.
- 10.2 The issue of new housing is often a key determinant in the decision by a local community to embark upon the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. The issue of future housing development in Saxmundham is a key issue for the town over the next 15-20 years, particularly its potential impacts upon the people, services and environment of the town and parish.
- 10.3 As referred to in earlier chapters, the Adopted Local Plan makes a significant allocation of 66.6 hectares (approximately 800 new dwellings) in the form of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. In addition, a further 2.18 hectares of land (approximately 40 dwellings) is allocated in the Local Plan, at land north-east of Street Farm. Between April 2001 and March 2020, 1,030 new homes were built in the parish with over 600 of these being constructed since 2011. The total quantity of dwellings in the parish in 2019 was estimated at 2,190 (source Valuation Office Agency). Data provided by East Suffolk Council indicated that on 31st March 2020, there were outstanding (unimplemented) permissions for a further 62 dwellings in the parish. The total as of March 2020 was therefore believed to be approximately 2,200 dwellings.

10.4 The Adopted Local Plan has identified the housing requirement for the district as a whole and has made specific allocations within the parish. The Modified Neighbourhood Plan recognises that in addition to these allocations, there will be 'windfall development' which will come forward during the Neighbourhood Plan period. Following early feedback from the community, the Town Council has therefore taken the view that neither the Neighbourhood Plan nor the Modified Neighbourhood Plan will make further allocations for new housing development but instead will focus its policies on managing the impacts of this proposed level of development over the plan period.

10.5 The Neighbourhood Plan also does not intend to alter the current adopted Settlement Boundary for the town and therefore will use that in the adopted Local Plan for the purposes of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. The settlement boundary will be expected to be the focus for new windfall development outside the specific Local Plan allocations. Proposals for development inside the settlement boundary including small scale infill development (e.g. individual houses or small groups of dwellings) will be supported subject to the proposals meeting certain design criteria such as not having adverse impacts upon the natural or built environment or highway safety and the design criteria set out in **Policy SAX1**. In addition, proposals that would lead to the development of new housing in existing back gardens, back land or tandem development will only be supported where they meet certain criteria in relation to impact on the natural and historic environment, highways safety and residential amenity. This form of development they should not result in a cramped form of development, or a density of development that detracts from the overall character of the area. The following **Policy SAX8** sets out the criteria for the consideration of proposals for new windfall and infill development.

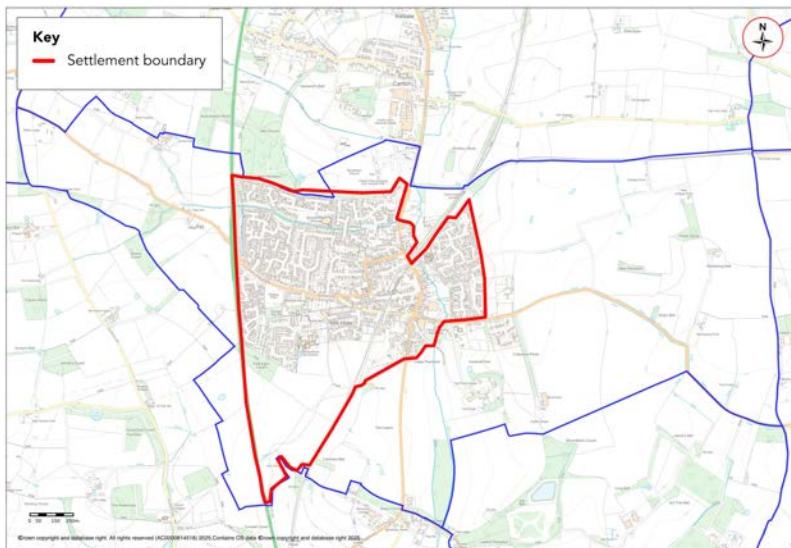


Figure 25: Settlement boundary (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

**POLICY**

**SAX8: Windfall and infill development**

Proposals for windfall and infill development should:

- a. Be located within the defined settlement boundary, and
- b. Not have an adverse impact upon the historic or natural environment or highway safety, and
- c. Have a close functional relationship with the existing built-up area of the town and the existing pattern of development, and
- d. Be self-contained with logical, natural boundaries, and
- e. Be appropriate in size and scale to the site, its setting, and the town, and
- f. Not have an adverse impact upon the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

Proposals for back land,<sup>11</sup> tandem<sup>12</sup> or the development of gardens will only be supported where they meet all of the above criteria, and where they would not result in a cramped form of development or a density of development that would detract from the overall character of the area. Both the existing and proposed dwellings should have sufficient outdoor amenity space.

**Objective 4: To promote the development of high quality, energy efficient housing to meet the needs of the people of Saxmundham.**

**Housing need and mix**

- 10.6 As well as housing numbers, the size, type and tenure of any new housing is also a key issue for local communities in respect of new housing. The specific mix of housing will clearly have an impact on the existing community and therefore careful thought needs to be applied to determining that mix.
- 10.7 Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, vibrant, and mixed community. Community consultation, including the results from the questionnaire revealed that residents want to have a range of types of accommodation to meet their changing needs and to cater for any needs that are currently not being met. 53 per cent of respondents felt that the

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<sup>11</sup> Development involving the re-use of parts of a number of rear gardens to existing houses for further residential development.

<sup>12</sup> Tandem development refers to land set back behind existing properties often existing houses, utilising brownfield or garden land generally with limited street frontage.

share of affordable housing (for rent or ownership) should account for between 10 per cent- 25 per cent (of the dwellings proposed on a site), whilst 47 per cent felt it should be over 25 per cent. 73 per cent of respondents supported owner-occupied housing as a priority with 41 per cent in favour of social housing. Shared ownership homes and sheltered housing each had the support of around one third and there was also some support for bungalows. The survey also asked for respondents to indicate a preference of the size of dwelling to be provided in the town in the future and 80 per cent of respondents indicated support for 2-3 bedrromed dwellings.

## Affordable Housing

10.8 There is no specific Housing Needs Assessment for Saxmundham as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, however there is wider district data available to support the adopted Local Plan policies. **See Local Plan policies SCLP5.8 and 5.10.** Further information can be found in the East Suffolk Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):  
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Affordable-Housing/Affordable-Housing-SPD.pdf>

10.9 The new dwellings allocated in the Adopted Local Plan should deliver at least 277 units (33 per cent) of Affordable Housing. There may be other opportunities that arise through infill, windfall, or redevelopment over the Neighbourhood Plan period. The Adopted Local Plan Policy SCLP5.10 requires that 1 in 3 dwellings should be affordable on sites over 10 units or 0.5 hectares. Of these affordable dwellings, 50 per cent should be for affordable rent/social rent, 25 per cent should be for shared ownership and 25 per cent should be for discounted home ownership. Provision is expected to be made on-site, unless it can be demonstrated in exceptional circumstances that it is not feasible or practical to provide the units on site in which case it may be agreed that a commuted sum could be paid towards provision of affordable housing outside the site.

## Dwelling size

10.10 The parish is expecting a substantial volume of new development during the Plan period. It would be unwise for this to be delivered in an unbalanced way (e.g. with too much emphasis on large homes). Those wishing to move within or relocate to the area will have a range of circumstances and preferences, and they should be offered a range of options. It is also overly simplistic to think

about home sizes in terms of the number of bedrooms offered. There is a significant contrast between a 4 bedroom 'executive' home with a luxury specification on a large rural plot and a 4-bedroom townhouse suitable for a large family on a lower income within walking distance of local schools.

10.11 Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan should encourage for all sizes of home to be provided in Saxmundham in future years. In particular, encouragement is given for additional provision of accommodation suitable for vulnerable people or those with special needs. Housing provision in the parish should be part of a dwelling size mix that is balanced overall and which meets the needs of a growing older population as well as those currently priced out of the market.

**POLICY**

**SAX9: Tenure blind Housing Development**

Where affordable housing is to be provided it should be indistinguishable from other tenures in external form, quality, and character. In order to encourage both physical and social integration, affordable housing should be spread throughout any new development.



## 11. Parish wide: Heritage and the natural environment

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**Objective 5:** To protect and enhance the conservation area, the town's heritage, green spaces, natural features and rural setting and to address the challenges of climate change.

### Heritage protection

- 11.1 Saxmundham possesses a high quality and varied historic environment with a wealth of historic buildings and structures concentrated within the historic core of the town centre which is reflected in its designation as a Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was originally designated in 1970 by East Suffolk County Council; it was then extended by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1980 and redesignated in 1991. The designation and re-appraisal of Conservation Areas is an important process and one that is governed by the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council has a duty to review its Conservation Area designations and in 2016, the District Council undertook a Conservation Area Appraisal resulting in the production of some management guidelines.
- 11.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal 2016, describes the overall character of Saxmundham as one of 'a reasonably well-preserved historic Suffolk market town of picturesque and attractive appearance. In particular the town centre and roads leading from the High Street retain the special characteristics that strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.' This Neighbourhood Plan

draws upon and affirms the Appraisal's contents and guidance in the following paragraphs.

- 11.3 At the heart of the Conservation Area is the historic Market Place. This area is located to the west of The High Street and hidden from the road by a row of commercial premises and dwellings. The High Street runs approximately north – south, and generally the most high-status buildings found in Saxmundham abut this road. Those premises located within the town centre are largely commercial (often with domestic accommodation above) whereas to the northern and southern extremities of the Conservation Area, as well as to the tributary roads to the east and west, domestic properties are found. Those dwellings located close to the railway station tend to be of nineteenth century date, smaller in scale and more concentrated in terms of spatial density. Scattered around this area are former commercial and industrial sites, including land once occupied by the gas works and the site of a maltings complex northeast of the station.
- 11.4 Closer to the Market Place buildings tend to be of sixteenth, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century date, whereas to the north and south extremities of the Conservation Area sizeable individual properties from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and set in private gardens and landscapes, are found.
- 11.5 The overall character of Saxmundham is very much one of an historic Suffolk market town which retains its traditional form and appearance. Despite some 20th Century development, some small-scale incremental change having taken place, the town centre retains the special characteristics which strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.
- 11.6 These special characteristics include, amongst other things, the number and quality of its traditional buildings and the fact that most still retain their traditional features; the shape, form and layout of the settlement itself; and the attractive relationship that exists between the older buildings and the spaces between and around them.
- 11.7 Important landscape features such as trees, shrubs, hedges, old walls, and railings all make a major contribution. It is vitally important therefore, that these special characteristics are retained and reinforced.
- 11.8 Inappropriate development, neglect and the cumulative effect of incremental change are a constant threat to the special architectural and historic interest of any Conservation Area. Detrimental change can take many forms, from infill

with poorly designed new development to modern replacement windows and doors in old buildings.

- 11.9 Other changes can include: inappropriate alterations and extensions which do not respect the scale, form and detailing of existing buildings, the use of modern materials and details in the area, insensitive highway works and signage, unsympathetic shopfronts and advertising, the construction of intrusive non-traditional walls, fences, driveways, garages, outbuildings and other structures.
- 11.10 In terms of materials and finishes, the use of concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors, cement render and modern bricks, should all be avoided. So too should the use of brown stain on timber joinery, windows and doors as it invariably appears as a particularly discordant feature in an area where the tradition of using white paint forms an important unifying element in the street scene. Old facing brickwork should not be painted over and where this has happened in the past the Council will provide advice on the potential for its removal.
- 11.11 The surfaces between buildings also need very careful consideration. Special materials, including natural stone, bound gravel and exposed aggregate kerbs, paving slabs and blocks will normally be the most suitable. Certain types of concrete brick paving should not be used because they have a harsh modern appearance which is very much at odds with the traditional character of the Conservation Area. In order to protect the character and appearance of the Saxmundham Conservation Area the Neighbourhood Plan will, wherever possible, seek to prevent such inappropriate changes from taking place through a specific Neighbourhood Plan policy (**SAX10 below**).
- 11.12 When development is proposed within a Conservation Area, it can be a challenge to consider what is appropriate for the design of new development and whether this can include high quality modern design. Pastiche can be acceptable but is not always well delivered particularly where existing buildings contain a number of decorative features. Certain characteristics can be used as inspiration without resorting to copying. This approach can ensure that new design is both creative and contextual. New development should always respect the grain of the Conservation Area, including preservation of building lines, relationship to gardens, streets, parking and farmland, scale, density and uses.

11.13 Proper account should also always be taken of the impact that new development adjacent to a Conservation Area can have on its setting. Although a Conservation Area boundary represents a demarcation enclosing a special area of historic interest, changes immediately outside of it can still have a significant impact on character and appearance. The setting of the Conservation Area, therefore, has an intrinsic value that must be acknowledged in any proposals for change to it, and this protection is enshrined in the NPPF.

11.14 A key component of Conservation Areas that is afforded protection by their designation is that regarding trees, to ensure that the spaces they need to grow and thrive are preserved and enhanced. New boundary treatments to property can also provide enhancement to the Conservation Area and here the use of materials rich in character with the settlement should be considered. Walls, fences, railings and hedges (whether native or ornamental) can be carefully chosen to reflect local styles and respond/create a sense of local distinctiveness. The Conservation Area Appraisal makes a number of recommendations, and these are reflected in **Policy SAX10** below. In addition the District Council have recently adopted an Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document which contains useful advice on many heritage matters: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy- and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Historic-Environment-SPD/Historic-Environment-SPD-reduced.pdf>

### Shopfronts in the Conservation Area

11.15 By their very nature Conservation Areas tend to be focused on the historic core of a settlement, which will usually include the town or village centre which includes the centre of retail activity. The successful and sustained stewardship of historic retail is closely linked with the on-going health of the retail sector.

11.16 In recent years, out of town retail sites, changing shopping habits and the growth of online retailing have all challenged town centres. As the number of people visiting and the range of shops to be found in town centres has changed, there has been a related impact on the local historic character of town centre buildings, their range of uses and street patterns. These may well be permanent changes. The decline in use of a number of particular types of buildings (for example pubs, post offices and banks) has added to the problem. Reduced footfall and increased vacancy rates in some areas has led to under-investment and a deterioration in the quality of the environment. At the same time, there have been changes to the planning system that have

made it easier to transform retail and office buildings into residential properties. These changes can also have a major impact on the character of historic places. On the other hand, there is some evidence that, following the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional smaller market towns may be attracting more, or losing less, shopping 'footfall' than larger cities.

- 11.17 Historic England has published a raft of useful advice on Historic Town Centres, including guidance on public realm,<sup>13</sup> Works to Highways and Public Realm: Streets for All<sup>14</sup> and highways improvements.<sup>15</sup> Such guidance advocates a collaborative approach to town centre management and a joined-up approach to transport (including the provision of the necessary services for town centre uses, such as loading bays) underpins a welcoming and attractive arrival experience for visitors.
- 11.18 Ensuring that public realm is designed to be in keeping with the surrounding built environment is important (controls over the use of signage and street furniture also contribute to the overall attractiveness of the public realm of a settlement). Reviewing and managing shop fronts as a collection rather than individually is also preferable.

*Please note that Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service advise that there should be early consultation with the Historic Environment Record (HER) and assessment of the archaeological potential of any area proposed for development at an appropriate stage in the design of new developments. The Archaeological service is happy to advise on the level of assessment and appropriate stages to be undertaken*

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<sup>13</sup> Public Realm - all parts of the built environment where the public has free access.

<sup>14</sup> Streets for All, Historic England, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/>

<sup>15</sup> Historic Town Centres and High Streets, Historic England, <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/historic-towns-and-high-streets/>

**POLICY****SAX10: Historic town centre and Conservation Area**

The special character of Saxmundham Conservation Area and its setting will be preserved and enhanced. This will be achieved by:

- a. Encouraging the retention and maintenance of traditional buildings and shop fronts which contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area, whether listed or not.
- b. Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities, character and appearance of the Conservation Area and takes account of its historic significance.
- c. Protecting the setting of the Conservation Area from development which adversely affects views into or out of the Conservation Area
- d. Ensuring that new development complements the built form and layout of the settlement itself and the attractive relationship which exists between the older buildings and the spaces between and around them.
- e. Encouraging the maintenance and enhancement of features and details which contribute to the area's local distinctiveness e.g., shopfronts, important landscape features such as trees and shrubs, walls, and railings.
- f. Requiring the use of high-quality traditional building materials and detailing, including but not limited to:
  - i. Local Suffolk bricks, e.g., soft reds largely on the rear elevations and hard whites on the front facades).
  - ii. Lime render.
  - iii. Pantile roofs.
  - iv. Decorative details such as pargeting, or ashlar scored lines/stone blocks.

The use of non-traditional materials such as concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors, cement render and modern bricks, should be avoided.

All proposals should have regard to the advice contained within the Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area as set out in **Appendix E** and where relevant the Concept Masterplan for the High Street (**Appendix F**).

**Signage and shopfronts**

Where the need for new or reconfigured advertising signage (including shopfronts, highways and directional signage) has been established,



consideration must be given to its size, design, and siting to ensure that it enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Proposals that seek to rationalise or reduce the amount of signage within the Conservation Area will be supported.

#### **Street furniture**

Proposals seeking to enhance the streetscape and public spaces through appropriate use of street furniture and where practicable results in the provision of wider pavements which preserves and enhances the area will be supported.

### **Non-designated Heritage Assets**

11.19 The government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 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 identify some Non-designated Heritage Assets as 'locally Listed'. The PPG goes on to explain that these can be identified through Local Plans (and now most commonly through Neighbourhood Plans) and can be a positive way for the local community to identify Non-designated Heritage Assets against consistent criteria so as to improve the predictability of the potential for sustainable development.

11.20 The NPPF indicates that the effects of an application on the significance of a Non-designated Heritage Assets should be taken into account in determining the applications.

11.21 The household survey undertaken did not ask specific questions around Saxmundham's heritage although in answers to other questions it was clear that local residents valued the historic past of the town centre and felt that more could be done to improve it and to protect it.

11.22 The Steering Group Members identified a number of potential Non-designated Heritage Assets in the town. All of the suggested nominations for Non-designated Heritage Assets have been assessed against criteria based on the Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7, page 9. The results of this exercise are shown in **Appendix B** and those buildings/structures that are



considered to score well when measured against the criteria are included in Policy SAX11 below.

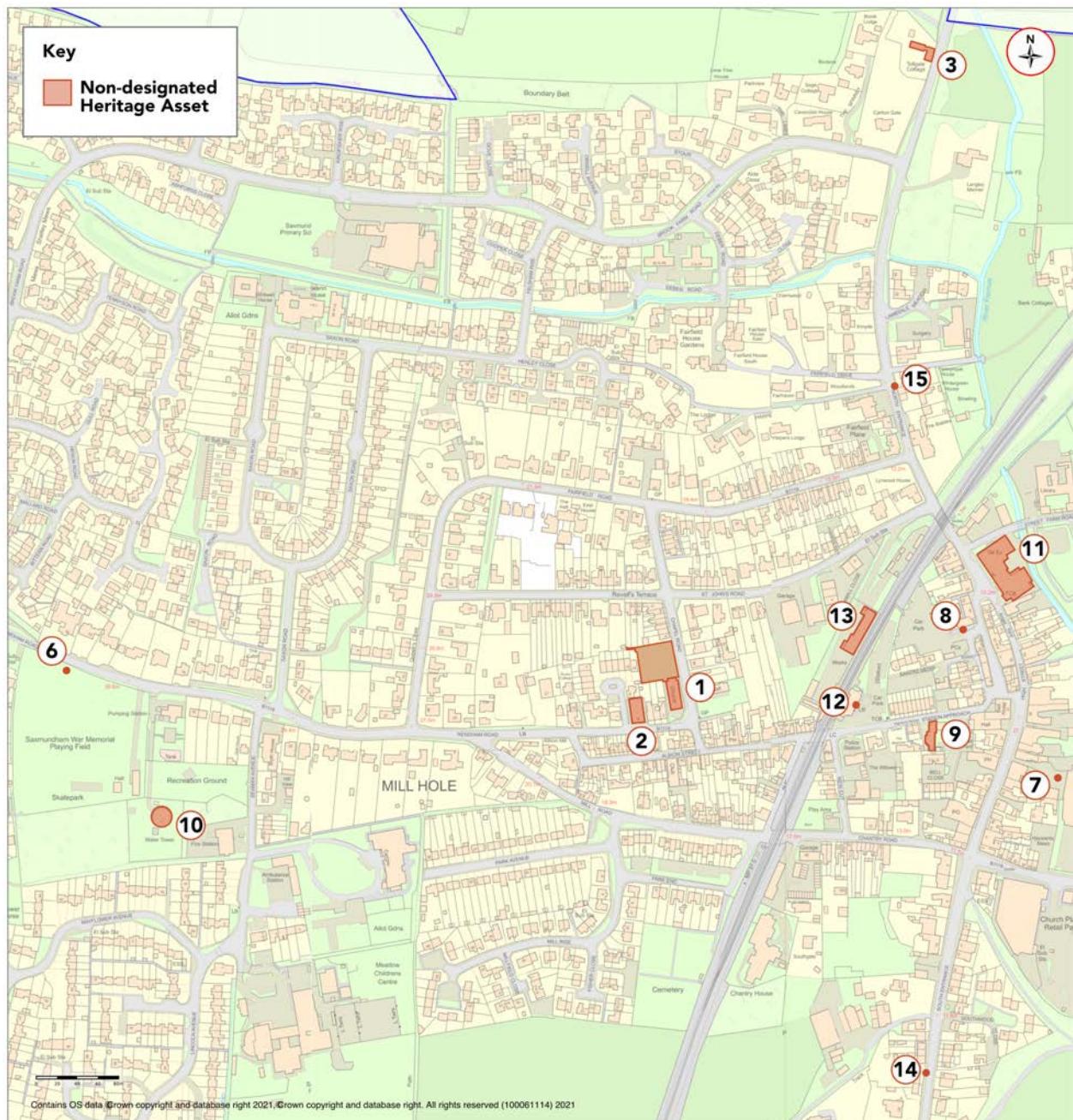


Figure 26: Non-designated Heritage Assets (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

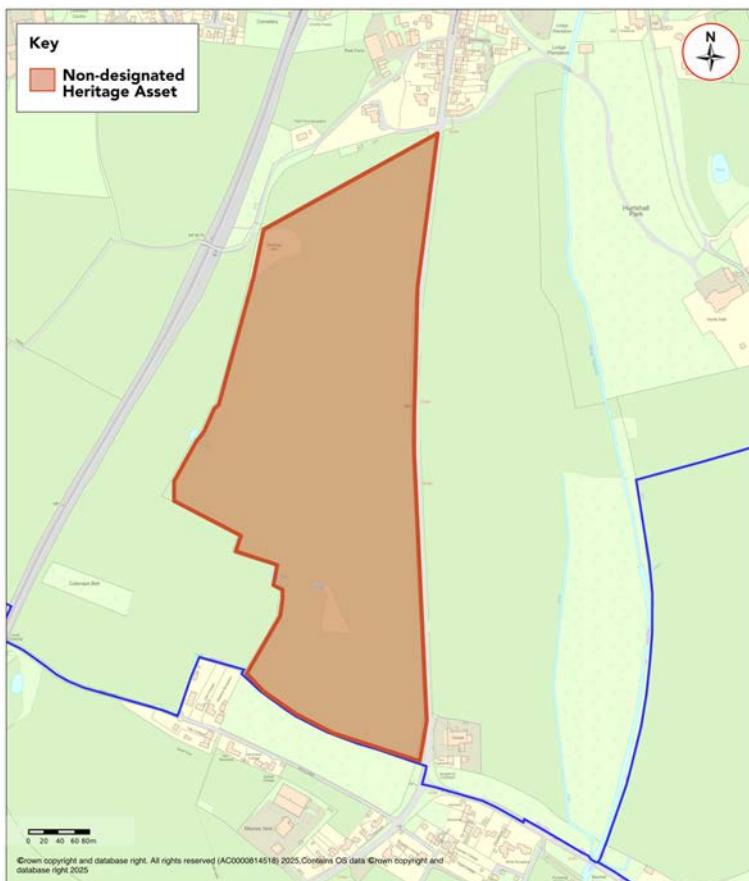


Figure 27: Non-designated Heritage Assets (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

Note: figure 26 and figure 27 have different scales.

POLICY

### SAX11: Non-designated Heritage Assets

The following historic buildings and features (**figure 26 and 27**) are identified as Non-Designated Heritage Assets due to their locally important character and historic features:

1. The United Reformed Church, Chapel Road including its graveyard.
2. The Old Fire Station, Rendham Road.
3. Toll Gate Cottage, North Entrance.
4. The Layers.
5. Milestone on the B1121.
6. The pillbox in the Memorial Field.
7. The War Memorial in Fromus Square.
8. The Town Pump.
9. The Gannon Rooms.
10. The Water Tower, Rendham Road.
11. The Telephone Exchange, High Street.
12. Victorian Post Box at the Railway Station.
13. Saxmundham Goods Shed.
14. Victorian Post Box at South Entrance.

## 15. George V Post Box at North Entrance.

Development proposals affecting these Non-designated Heritage Assets will be judged having regard to the scale of any harm or loss to their significance which may include its setting and relationship to its immediate surroundings and the contribution it makes to the character of the local area.

## Landscape

11.23 Saxmundham is an historic market town set on the bank of the River Fromus, which is a tributary of the River Alde that ultimately reaches the sea south of Orford Ness, after skirting past Snape, Aldeburgh and Orford.

11.24 The river valley locates Saxmundham just between two specific landscape character types - the Rolling Estate Sandlands and the Rolling Estate Claylands (to the west) as defined by the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, which as a joint project between the County Council and the Suffolk Districts. Peripheral parts of the town also fall within the Ancient Rolling Farmlands character type. The underlying geology is essentially crag deposits, sands and gravels laid down during the Pliocene period over the chalk, which underlies all of Suffolk at depth.

11.25 The key characteristics of the Rolling Estate Sandlands character type are:

- Rolling river terraces and coastal slopes.
- Sandy and free draining soils with areas of heathland.
- Late enclosure with a pattern of tree belts and straight hedges.
- Landscape parklands.
- A focus of settlement in the Estate Sandlands landscape.
- 19th century red brick buildings with black glazed pantiles in the east.
- Tree belts and plantations throughout.
- Occasional and significant semi-natural woodlands and ribbons of wet woodland.
- Complex and intimate landscape on valley sides.

11.26 The Rolling Estate Claylands character type occurs in east Suffolk as linear bands in the middle reaches of the valleys of a number of rivers including the Alde and The Fromus around Kelsale and Carlton. The typical characteristics of this valley side landscape of clay loams with parklands and fragmented woodland include:



- Rolling valley-side landscape.
- Medium clay and loamy soils.
- Organic pattern of fields.
- Occasional areas of more rational planned fields.
- Numerous landscape parks.
- Fragmented woodland cover, both ancient and plantation.
- Winding hedged and occasionally sunken lanes.

11.27 This Neighbourhood Plan recognises the intrinsic value and special qualities of this area of landscape and proposes ensure that distinctive features of the two landscape character types are protected insofar as they contribute to the distinct landscape setting of the town.

11.28 The transition between rural landscape character and the urban form of the edge of the town is important not only for its landscape value appearance but because of the visual gateway it provides to the appearance of the edge of the town. Land to the south of the town and east of the B1121 with views to Hurts Hall and the town beyond was identified as sensitive by the Suffolk Coastal Settlement Sensitivity Assessment, which was undertaken to support the Local Plan.

11.29 Representations made during the Local Plan Examination further expressed the sensitivity of The Layers to development. The Layers is an open area to the west of the B1121 and has some heritage significance –the land between the B1121 and the tree belt being considered particularly sensitive to built development. The Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken to support the Local Plan advises that built development here should be avoided. Local Plan policy SCLP12.29 clarifies that the land east of the railway, which is outside the settlement boundary, is 'identified for the provision of open space and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) as part of the Garden Neighbourhood. The retention of existing [agricultural] uses on land to the east of the railway would be supported where this complements the delivery of open space and SANG.

11.30 Through consultation, the north, south, east and west entrances to the town have been identified as important entrances providing important 'green gateways' due to the soft edge they provide between urban area and the surrounding rural landscape character. Proposals that would enhance the visual appearance of an entrance or 'gateway' to the town will be supported, however where 'green' gateways or substantially undeveloped entrances

currently exist, these should be maintained as 'soft' entrances to assist with the urban to rural transition.

### Important public views

11.31 In addition, the Steering Group have also identified a number of important views and vistas. The Group were mindful that any policy which sought to protect these views should focus on those that are 'important' to the overall landscape character of the parish and which can be enjoyed from publicly accessible locations, e.g., footpaths, public highway, an existing open space, or through a gap between buildings. The views identified are as follows:

1. **View from the B1121 looking across to Hurts Hall and St John's Church:**  
The road undulates and at the top of two rises there are open views across to the Church and Hurts Hall which are both important landmarks.
  - a) Looking north-east from a point approximately 200m south of the milestone. This is a panoramic view which includes open farmland in the foreground, Hurts Hall and St John's Church in the middle distance backed by wooded rising land.
  - b) Looking north-east from a point approximately 100m south of the milestone. This view centres on the church, which is framed by a gap in the trees, and also encompasses the open farmland setting and the rising wooded land behind.
2. **View from the high point of The Layers looking across the River Fromus to Hurts Hall:** Looking due east from the tree line which marks the western edge of The Layers, across open farmland and the River Fromus. This gives a wide view of Hurts Hall



and its associated buildings, and the backdrop of rising woodland. It demonstrates the contrast between the open landscape of the valley and the wooded ridge, below which the town sits.

3. **View along Chantry Road towards St John's Church:** Looking east from outside 7, Chantry Road the road dips away, then curves and rises towards the church. In summer trees fill the view, with the church tower visible above the trees, but in the winter the church is very prominent and dominates the view.



4. **View from Albion Street across the town to Church Hill.** From a point near the top of Albion Street opposite the Sax Club looking due east. This gives an interesting view across the rooftops of the historic centre of the town to the green ridge beyond topped by a line of trees. It emphasises the historic nature of the town and the close proximity of the countryside.



5. **View towards the town from the B1119 (Leiston Road).** The approach from Leiston is across a wide-open plateau. Looking west at a point about 400m east of the access to Wood Farm the view of the tree line along the ridge becomes conspicuous, the town below is hidden, but the view of the trees and the change in the landscape is the first clear indication that the town is nearby (see also Policy EN1).



## 6. View to towards open countryside from

**South Entrance:** This view shows the historic exit view from the town to the country, looking along the B1121 to The Layers and the treeline beyond, and reinforcing the traditional settlement boundary.

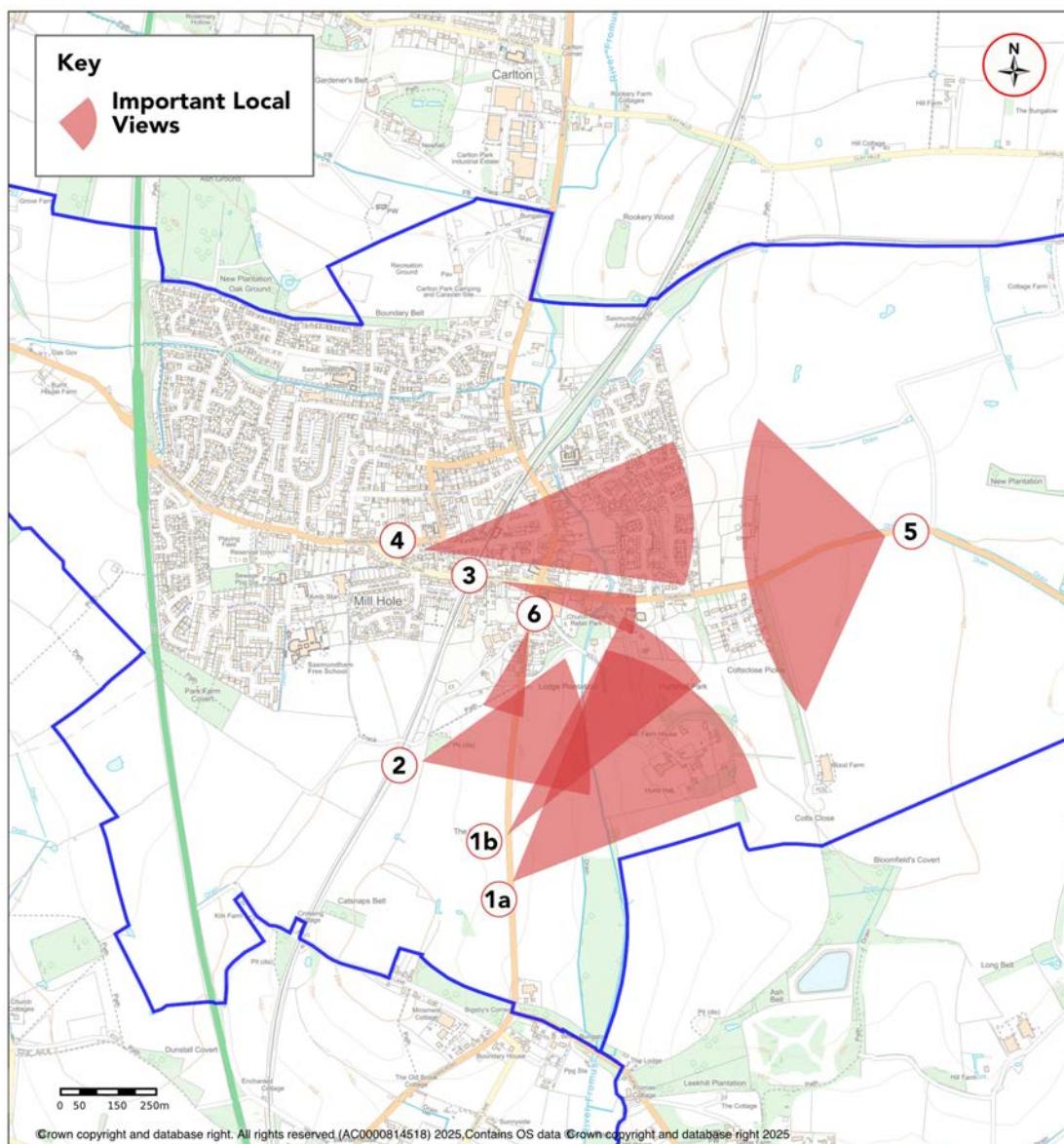


Figure 28: Important Local Views (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

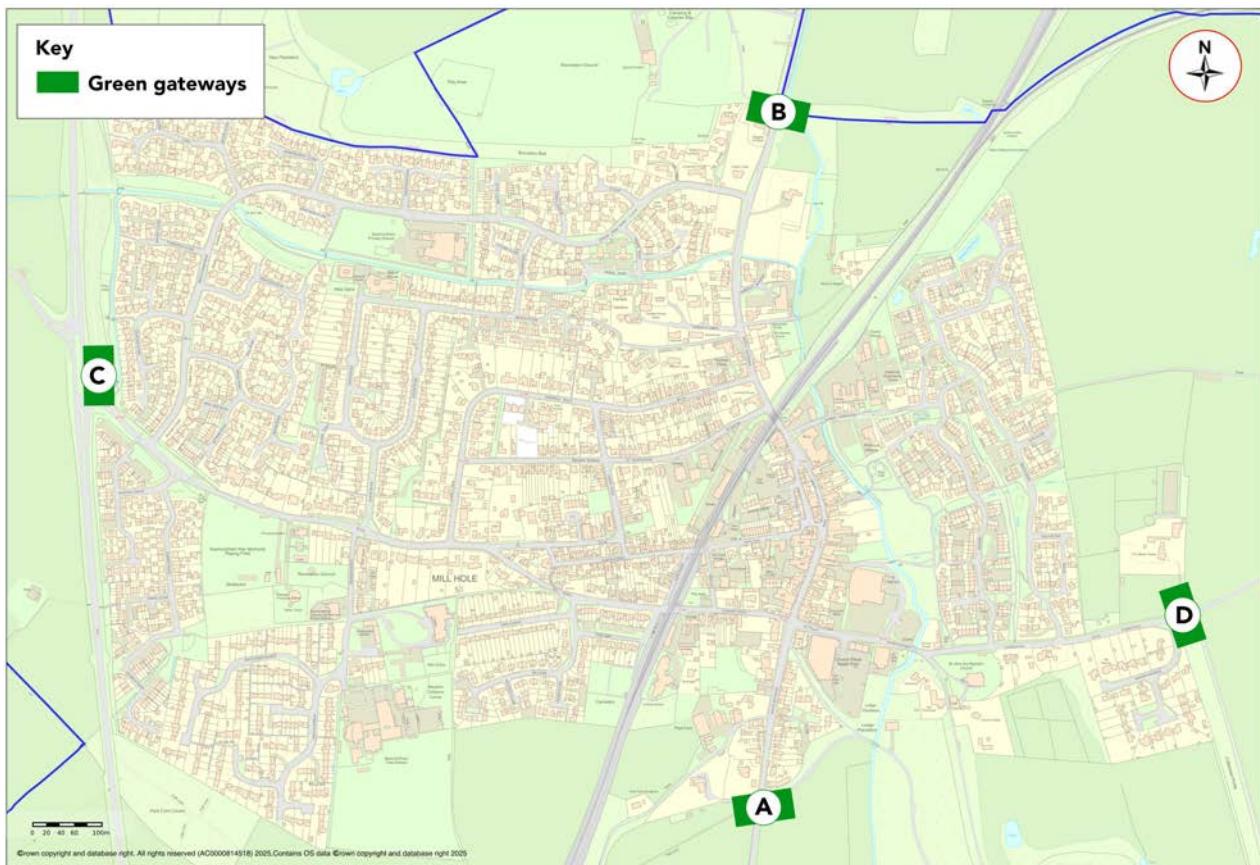


Figure 29: Green gateways (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

11.32 Taking the above into account **Policy SAX12** has been developed which covers the distinct but related elements of landscape character, the protection of important public views and the enhancement of specific entrances to the town.

## SAX12: Gateways, views and the landscape setting of Saxmundham

The visual scenic value of the landscape and countryside in the parish outside of the defined settlement boundary will be protected from development that may adversely affect this character. The existing clear landscape break that physically separates different settlements shall be maintained in order to prevent coalescence and loss of individual settlement distinctiveness and identity.

Development proposals within or which would affect the following important local views should take account of the view concerned. Developments, which would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape or character of the view concerned, will not be supported.

1. View from the B1121 looking across to Hurts Hall and St John's Church.
2. View from the high point of The Layers looking across the River Fromus to Hurts Hall.
3. View along Chantry Road towards St John's Church.
4. View from Albion Street across the town to Church Hill.
5. View towards the town from the B1119 (Leiston Road).
6. View towards the open countryside from South Entrance.

### Green Gateways

Proposals that would enhance the visual appearance of an entrance or 'gateway' to the town will be supported however where 'green' gateways or substantially undeveloped entrances currently exist; these should be maintained as 'soft' entrances to assist with the urban to rural transition.

The following are identified as important Green Gateways (figure 29):

- A. Southern entrance to be maintained as a green gateway to the town with the provision of accessible natural green space suitable for recreation.
- B. Northern entrance (on Main Road), proposals that would enhance the existing gateway feature adjacent to Tollgate Cottage will be supported in principle, subject to other criteria in this policy.
- C. Western entrance at Rendham Road. The existing landscape buffer north of this entrance between the built-up edge of the town and the A12 shall be retained and enhanced.
- D. Eastern entrance at Leiston Road. The existing landscape buffer and tree line at this entrance shall be retained.



Where gateway enhancements are proposed, schemes should be designed to ensure that gateway enhancements do not detract from highway safety and visual amenity and should minimise the need for non-essential lighting.

Opportunities to improve the public realm at entrances to the town, through the use of appropriate hard or soft landscaping measures will also be supported where they include the use of vernacular materials and native planting.

## Natural assets

11.33 In terms of nature conservation sites, the parish itself does not contain significant sites, however this area of East Suffolk is in relatively close proximity to the extremely sensitive Sandlings, Alde-Ore and Minsmere-Walberswick Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Saxmundham falls within the 13 km Zone of Influence (ZOI) for the Council's Recreational Disturbance, Avoidance and Mitigation Scheme (RAMS). As evidenced by the Recreational Disturbance, Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy additional residential development within the ZOI could have a detrimental impact on the designations due to increased recreational disturbance. Natural England advises that consideration of 'off-site' measures (i.e., in and around the relevant European designated site(s)) is required as mitigation for predicted recreational disturbance impacts.

11.34 East Suffolk Council, together with Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts and Ipswich Borough, are taking a collaborative approach to strategic mitigation to support development and avoid impacts on internationally important designated wildlife sites. The councils have produced a combined recreational disturbance, avoidance and mitigation strategy (Suffolk RAMS) for the area. This identifies and costs measures necessary to mitigate recreational impacts and confirms how they will be funded and delivered over the lifetime of the Local Plans. Such measures are to be delivered strategically through the Suffolk Coast RAMS, to make the sites more resilient to increased recreational pressures. A proportionate financial contribution should therefore be secured from proposed residential development in the Zone of Influence (ZOI) in line with the Suffolk Coast RAMS and all new housing development in Saxmundham is required to contribute to this scheme. The Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan identified the need for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate the potential impacts of recreational



disturbance on the above SPA sites from the Garden Neighbourhood allocation.

11.35 Nationally and internationally designated sites are protected through national planning policy in the NPPF and also in specific legislation. However, there is often less protection for locally designated sites or non-designated local sites which have a wildlife value or for specific features which may have a wildlife value. **Policy SAX13** below seeks to such features where they are typical of the prevailing landscape character types, such as woodlands, tree belts and plantations, straight hedges etc and where development would damage their wildlife value.

11.36 The Environment Act 2021 introduced a new system for the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). In simple terms, BNG is an approach to development which aims to leave the natural environment in a *measurably* better state than it was beforehand. Planning policy that seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity is not new, but this latest approach focuses in more on the *measurability* aspect. Planning applications will need to quantify the different habitat types on site both before and after the proposed development using the latest Biodiversity Metric. A minimum of 10% gain in biodiversity is now mandatory on almost all planning applications except for a small number of statutory exceptions and its importance in the planning process has been significantly elevated.

11.37 There are a number of veteran trees and areas of ancient woodland in the parish. A veteran tree is one that is of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of its age, or a tree in the ancient stage of its life or trees that are old relative to others of the same species. Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat. The policy also seeks to protect veteran trees.

11.38 The policy also refers to 'wildlife corridors' which is a term used to refer to any linear feature in the landscape that can be used for the migration or dispersal of wildlife. Such corridors allow for the linking of habitats and reduce the isolation of populations. Linear features may vary and may also not be continuous however patches of natural habitat can benefit wildlife and occasionally the term 'steppingstones' is used to refer to them. The role of wildlife corridors is assuming greater importance and opportunities should be taken to create them as a consequence of new development.

**POLICY**

**SAX13: Protection and enhancement of natural assets**

Development proposals will be expected to protect and enhance existing ecological networks and wildlife corridors. Proposals should retain existing features of biodiversity value, associated with the Rolling Estate Claylands and Rolling Estate Sandlands Landscape Character types, where possible to do so, (including ponds, trees (including veteran trees), woodland, hedgerows, and verges).

Development proposals will be supported where they provide a minimum 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity through, for example:

- a. The creation of new natural habitats.
- b. The planting of additional trees and hedgerows.
- c. The restoration and reparation of fragmented ecological networks.

Development proposals should conform to the mitigation hierarchy and seek initially to retain existing features and avoid loss or damage of biodiversity. Where loss or damage is unavoidable, the development shall provide for appropriate replacement planting or appropriate natural features on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Where development proposals cause damage to identified natural features, wildlife corridors around the interruption will be constructed.

Proposals for new buildings (including non-residential development) should incorporate measures to protect and enhance wildlife species including the incorporation of wildlife friendly measures e.g., bat, swallow and swift boxes, hedgehog doors and insect bricks etc, new garden hedgerows and trees. Consideration should also be given to the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which can provide considerable benefits to wildlife.

Proposals to enhance and increase the biodiversity of important spaces, including green spaces will be supported as will proposals to restore or enhance traditional hedgerows in the parish.

**Community Gardens and allotments**

11.39 The NPPF highlights the important contribution to the character and quality of environments that can be derived from trees. They also help with mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The NPPF requires planning policies to



ensure that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees and other environmental features into developments such as parks, community orchards, community gardens and allotments. The NPPF also recognises the important beneficial contribution to health and wellbeing that access to open spaces such as communal gardens and allotments can bring to a community in addition to the opportunity to grow ones own food. New provision should be easily accessible to the community which it is intended to serve. The Neighbourhood Plan Household survey results revealed significant demand for allotments. (See paragraph 8.9) . Some further useful guidance can be found in the East Suffolk Healthy Environments SPD which was adopted in 2024 and includes guidance on matters such as open space provision, allotments and SANG: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Healthy-Environments/Healthy-Environments-SPD-Adoption-version.pdf>

11.40 As well as the provision of new community spaces, planning policies should also seek to safeguard and protect those already in existence, either because of the physical contribution they make to the character of the area or where they have a value to their community.

11.41 The existing community garden at the former Fromus Centre site is specifically identified for protection under **Policy SAX14** below.

POLICY	SAX14: Community gardens and allotments
	<p>The existing community garden at the former Fromus Centre site within Saxmundham will be protected (see <b>Policy SAX15</b>).</p> <p>All new large scale residential developments should be strongly encouraged to make provision for a proportionate area of land for a community garden or allotments to allow for the opportunity for residents to grow their own food. Such spaces and any associated facilities (benches, paths) should be accessible to those with limited mobility in order to reduce the isolation of vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Where land becomes available, the provision of allotments will, in principle, be supported.</p>



## Local Green Spaces

11.42 The National Planning Policy Framework 2024, at paragraphs 106-108 introduces the concept of Local Green Spaces which can be identified through neighbourhood plans by local communities and allows green areas identified as being of particular importance to be protected. Paragraph 107, sets out 3 broad criteria for identifying and designating such spaces as follows: 'The Local Green Space designation should only be used when the green space is:

- in relatively 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) tranquility and richness of its wildlife, and
- local in character and not an extensive tract of land'.

11.43 The NPPF at paragraph 108 then goes on to state that 'policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for green belts' and therefore affords them a very high level of protection. It is also clear that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used as a mechanism to try to block or resist development on agricultural land immediately adjacent to village development boundaries and that a successful designation must meet the criteria outlined above.

11.44 Such spaces can be viewed locally as equally as important as the landscape setting of an area. Such spaces are green spaces found within the built-up area that 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 particularly for benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing and help define what makes that specific settlement what it is.

11.45 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have identified a number of spaces that would meet the criteria and should be protected because of their value to the local community. Each space has been assessed against the NPPF criteria. The result is the 11 spaces shown in figure 30 and listed within **Policy SAX15**. Assessments for each one against the criteria set out in the NPPF have been carried out and these are shown in **Appendix C**.



## Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG)

11.46 The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan identified the need for Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG) areas to mitigate the potential impacts of recreational disturbance on the Sandlings, Alde-Ore and Minsmere–Walberswick Special Protection Areas. The Local Plan Appropriate Assessment identifies the need for SANGS to be of high quality and design to deter visitors from popular sensitive sites, to be of a sufficient scale to deter driving to European sites and to accommodate circular walks that provide a varied and high-quality experience in terms of visual and other sensory factors. As mentioned in earlier sections, development within the District (and within the Neighbourhood Plan Area) will also be expected to contribute to the Recreation Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.

11.47 To reduce the impact of the proposed Garden Neighbourhood development and alongside providing for sufficient SANG areas, the Local Plan policies require significant green infrastructure provision and areas of natural green space for recreation to be integral to the layout of the Garden Neighbourhood. Reflecting the heritage sensitivities and requirements for SANG, the Local Plan sets out that any uses to be delivered on land to the east of the railway to the south of the town, are to be open space/SANG provision only, however the Local Plan does recognise that on the land east of the railway there is scope for some existing agricultural uses to remain. The Local Plan policy also indicates that the provision of open space and enhancements related to provision of SANG do not need to be confined to land to the east of the railway. Alongside this, the delivery of an integrated network of green infrastructure is expected to be provided throughout the Garden Neighbourhood (see also **Chapter 12**).

11.48 The Neighbourhood Plan builds upon this strategic aim and seeks to protect an area of land to the south of the town and east of the railway line, which includes The Layers, as a significant area of SANG to perform the 'avoidance' function. The role of the SANG would be to provide avoidance measures for the potential impact of residential development of this kind on the SPA by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA. The effectiveness of SANG as mitigation will depend upon its location, design, and access. The SANG should be located to be easily accessible from the south of the town and access to it from the new housing area, will need to be in the north of the SANG area, where the only viable safe crossing point over the railway exists. The purpose of the SANG is twofold. It is required not only to 'mitigate' the new Garden Neighbourhood but also to 'compensate' for the change in access to the area that is currently enjoyed by residents of the town e.g. informal

recreation such as dog walking. The result must be such that the SANG is more attractive than the SPA to users of the kind that currently visit the SPA.

11.49 Natural England provides guidance on the identification and management of SANG. Given that the purpose is to make the SANG as attractive and accessible as possible for visitors there is an acknowledgement that there may be the need in the future for additional facilities to be provided, that are connected to the successful functioning of the SANG such as discreetly located car parking, visitor routes.

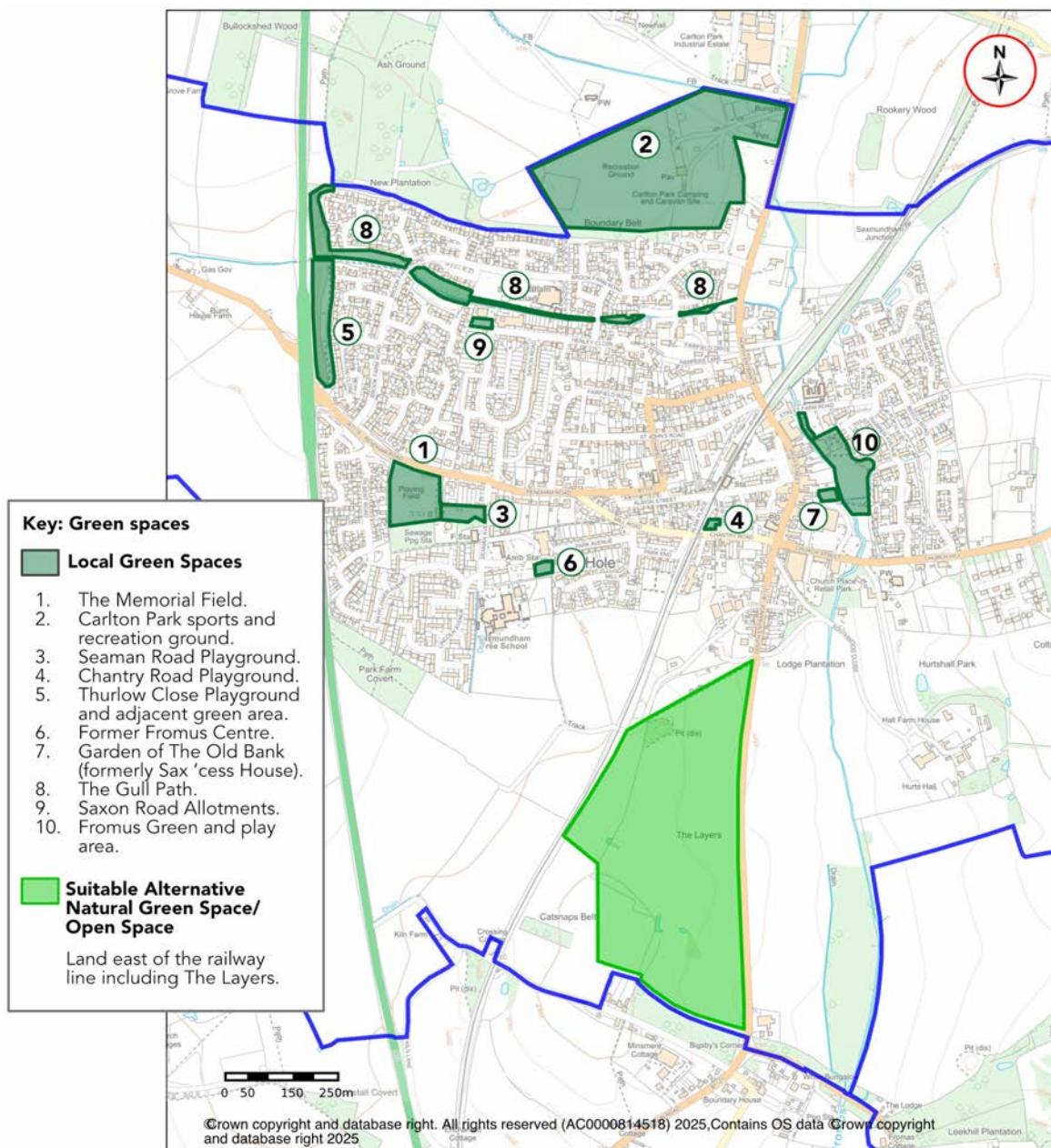


Figure 30: Local Green Spaces (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary (amended map to include new parish boundary).

## SAX15: Green Spaces

### Local Green Spaces

The following are identified as Local Green Spaces (**figure 30**) where any proposals will be judged against the requirements which rule out development unless there are very special circumstances:

1. The Memorial Field.
2. Carlton Park sports and recreation ground.
3. Seaman Avenue Playground.
4. Chantry Road Playground.
5. Thurlow Close Playground and adjacent green area.
6. The Community Garden at the former Fromus Centre off Seaman Avenue.
7. Garden of The Old Bank (formerly Sax'cess House).
8. The Gull Path.
9. Saxon Road Allotments.
10. Fromus Green and play area.

### Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

Land east of the Railway line and to the south of Saxmundham, including land known as The Layers is identified as an area of open space and SANG, in connection with the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood which will serve to meet the informal day to day recreational needs of both the new Garden Neighbourhood and the existing community whilst allowing for the retention of the existing uses of the land where it complements the delivery of the open space and the SANG. The location, design and access of the proposed SANG should take into account the purpose of the SANG, the need for easy and safe access to it together with potential impacts on landscape, biodiversity and heritage.

# 12. South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood

## South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood

**Objective SSGN1:** To create a high quality, well designed, distinctive development in line with modern 'Garden City' principles which is valued by its residents and recognised as an asset to the Town.

12.1 Policy SCLP12.29 in the Adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (SCLP) 2020 allocates approximately 67 hectares of land as the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, the development of which is expected to provide an 'education led' scheme of 800 dwellings, community facilities and employment land. The Garden Neighbourhood is envisaged to be an extension to the existing built-up area of Saxmundham.

12.2 The designated Neighbourhood Area for the Modified Neighbourhood Plan includes the revised parish boundary and therefore the modified Neighbourhood Plan is able to include policies which are applicable to the Garden Neighbourhood.

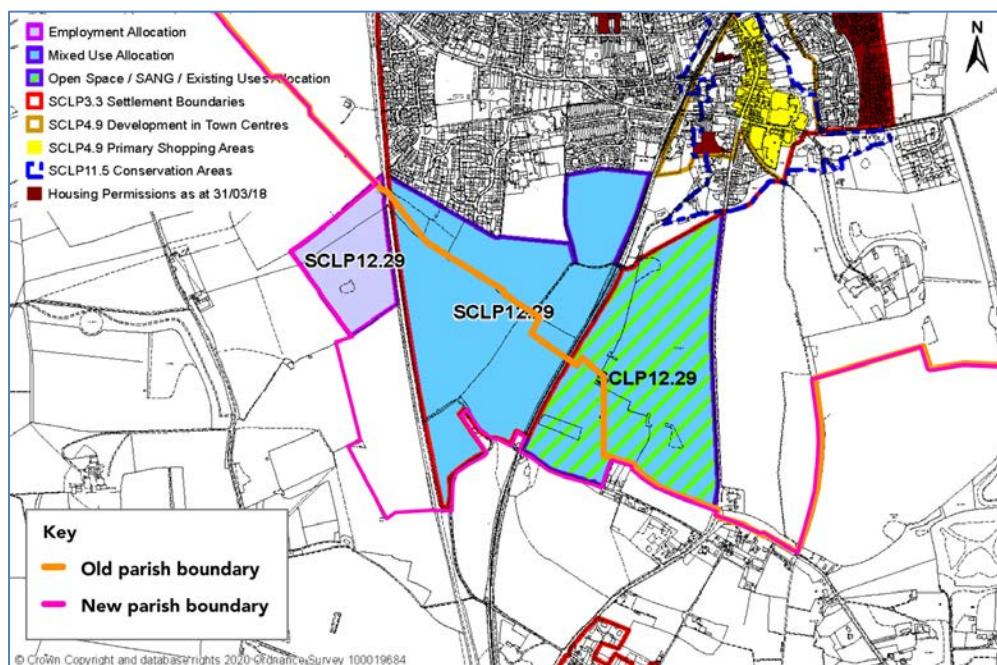


Figure 31:  
Map of  
Local Plan  
allocations  
with old and  
new parish  
boundaries  
added

## Strategic context for the Local Plan allocation

12.3 Local Plan Policy **SCLP12.29** provides the overarching allocation for the Garden Neighbourhood and sets out the key issues that will need to be addressed for development to be brought forward successfully. The Local Plan places considerable emphasis on the need for the development to be delivered through a masterplan approach brought forward and informed by landowner collaboration and community engagement. The Town Council believes that such a masterplan, produced with both the input of the landowners and through meaningful engagement with the community is essential to ensuring that the development of the Garden Neighbourhood is a success, in its own right and for the town as a whole. The Neighbourhood Plan policies (consistent with the Local Plan's policies) seek to influence and shape proposals that come forward for the development of the Garden Neighbourhood including through the collaborative masterplan process outlined in the Local Plan.

12.4 Policy SCLP12.29 of the Local Plan allocates 67 hectares of land for a mixed use development including residential, employment and community uses. The policy outlines that the Masterplan should include the following elements:

- Approximately 800 dwellings.
- Primary school with potential for expansion for early years provision - on a site of 2.2ha of which 0.1 ha reserved for early years setting.
- Community hub.<sup>16</sup>
- A significant area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace - the area of land east of the railway is identified for the provision of open space and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).
- Green infrastructure, including informal and formal open spaces, circular walks.
- Formal recreation areas for all ages, including play space.
- Design and layout, which supports a dementia friendly environment.
- Provision of new vehicular access point from the A12 supported by safe access for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Significant pedestrian and cycle accessibility throughout the site with connections and improvements to networks beyond the site, including to the station and town centre.

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<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this policy services and facilities could include convenience store, shops, meeting places, allotments, education facilities, care facilities and medical facilities.

- Employment land to the west of the A12.

12.5 The Local Plan provides an indicative concept draft masterplan diagram which gives a broad indication of where various elements of the Garden Neighbourhood may be located. Within the allocation it is envisaged that there will be areas of residential/ mixed use development, areas of woodland, informal and formal open space, existing mature hedgerows and tree belts and a number of pedestrian and cycle accesses from the town into the Garden Neighbourhood. The allocation provides for a community hub located within the residential/mixed-use area, and a separate employment area. The indicative masterplan in the Local Plan assumes that a new primary school will be located within the residential/mixed use areas but does not give a specific location. Apart from the allocation of the employment site to the west of the A12, and land to the east of the railway for green space/SANG purposes only (and not for built development), the siting and layout of the new development is left for the collaborative master-planning process to address.

12.6 Suffolk County Council have advised that: "This site has high archaeological potential. It is situated in a favourable location for archaeological activity, overlooking the River Fromus on an area of light soils. To the north, in a similar topographic location, prehistoric and Anglo Saxon settlement has been identified. Within the site, an undated double line cropmark runs the length of the site parallel to the river. Finds of Iron Age, Roman, Anglo Saxon and medieval date have also been recorded from immediately adjacent fields. Geophysical survey has been undertaken and further archaeological assessment is required". Suffolk County Council have also highlighted that archaeological assessment should be required to inform viability of schemes, mitigation requirements and conservation in situ of significant remains. Any mitigation should involve outreach proposals. There should be early consultation with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) regarding proposals.



Figure 32: South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, indicative draft masterplan from the Local Plan. Note: indicative draft masterplan assumes new primary school within the residential/mixed use areas (source: Area Specific Strategies, Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020).

### Proposed Employment area west of A12

12.7 As shown in the indicative masterplan from the Local Plan above, an area located west of the A12 is identified for employment uses to provide opportunities for jobs, designed in the context of a Garden Neighbourhood. Given the location of the allocated employment area directly adjacent to the A12 and its wider visibility in the landscape, any proposed buildings on the site should be designed to integrate and assimilate into the wider landscape. Furthermore any lighting schemes should be limited to that which is required for security and safety purposes for the operation of those employment uses. Proposals should seek to prevent light pollution through the use of energy efficient technologies, down lighting, timers and minimising adverse impacts on wildlife. Any new development proposed outside of the allocated area would be considered to fall within 'open countryside' and would be subject to the relevant policies in the Local Plan. Proposals for additional employment/commercial land uses here would need to demonstrate that a need for the type and size of such uses exists and that these can only be accommodated in this location and not elsewhere e.g. an existing employment site or the town centre. Any landscape impacts would be required to be successfully mitigated.

## Changing context relevant to the Garden Neighbourhood – School Site

12.8 A significant change in circumstances since the Neighbourhood Plan was first prepared has been the closure of the secondary school in August 2024. The school site is located on the edge of the existing built up area accessed off Seaman Avenue and lies immediately north of the Local Plan allocation. It is within the settlement boundary for the town. The site comprises former secondary school buildings, car parking area, areas of hardstanding, and 2.8 hectares of playing fields and sports pitches. The site lies outside of the Local Plan allocation. However the location of the former school site and its proximity to the Garden Neighbourhood development opens up potential possibilities which could be explored in terms of creating more effective connections between the Garden Neighbourhood and parts of the town. The site is currently vacant and has been promoted by Suffolk County Council for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). If approved it is anticipated that only part of the site would be required for this purpose, with part of the site remaining with potential for other uses. The site is important because of its size and location and offers potential significant opportunities to benefit the community in terms of the reuse of the buildings and the site for indoor recreation, recreational community use of the existing playing fields, as well as providing additional connections between the Garden Neighbourhood and existing areas of the town.

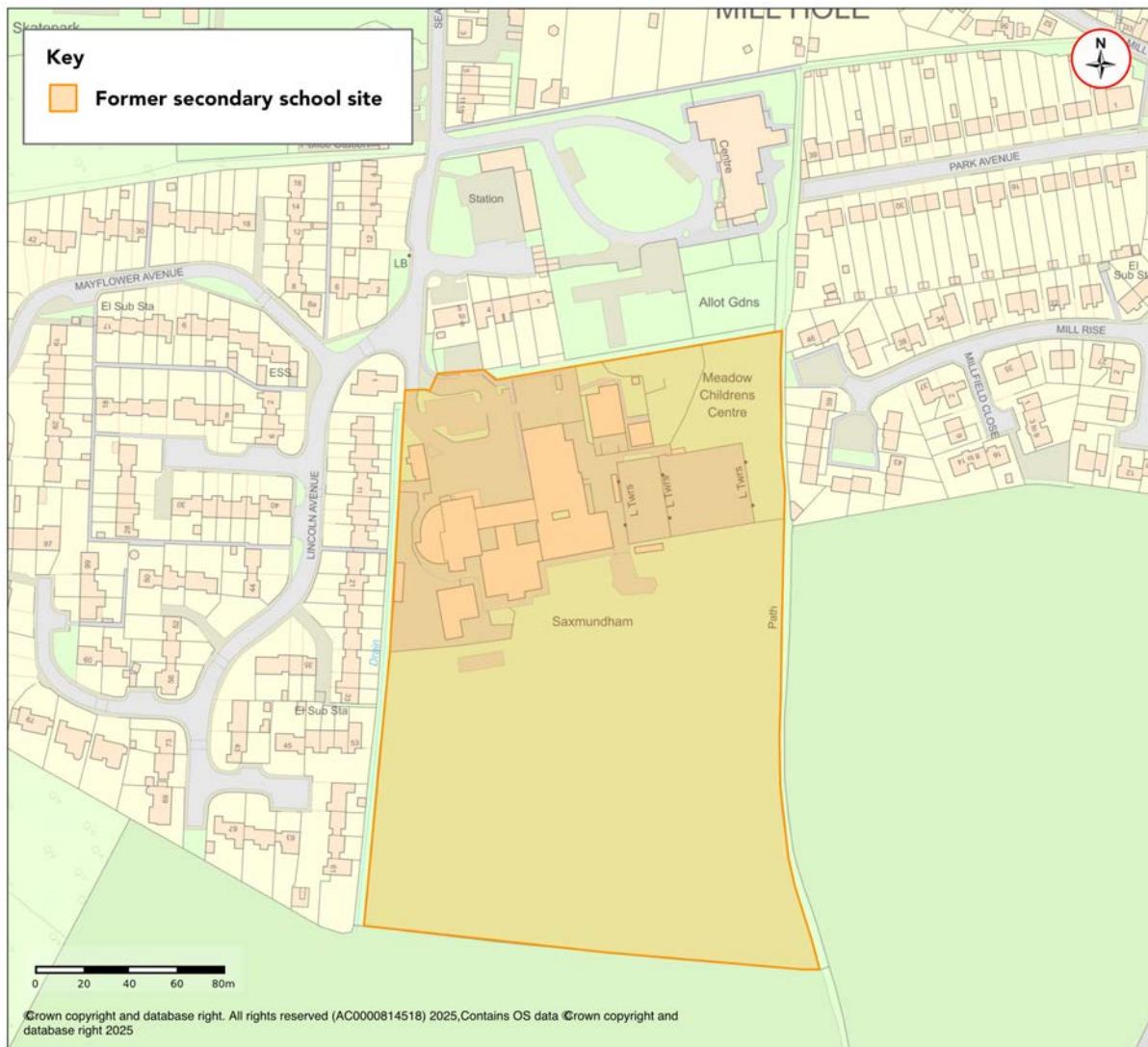


Figure 33: Former secondary school site (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

## Planning policies for the Garden Neighbourhood

**Objective SSGN2: To successfully integrate – physically, environmentally, and socially – the new neighbourhood with the existing town and community of Saxmundham.**

12.9 This section of the Modified Neighbourhood Plan aims to provide more detail to the Local Plan policy, provide input into the collaborative masterplan process and identify specific land use requirements that will need to take place to enable the Garden Neighbourhood to come forward. The details in this

section have been informed by community consultation undertaken as part of the development of the 'Made' Neighbourhood Plan

12.10 The ambition for the site is to create a high quality, well designed, distinctive new development in line with modern Garden City principles <sup>17</sup> which is valued by its residents and recognised as an asset to the town. Moreover, for its future inhabitants, the Garden Neighbourhood should:

- Foster a strong sense of community.
- Encourage positive social interaction.
- Create a sense of pride for the neighbourhood.
- Be a happy home where people can feel safe and secure inside and outside.
- Be a neighbourhood that demonstrably cares for all its living inhabitants – human and others.

12.11 Green infrastructure could contribute to this ambition for example in the form of informal green spaces, parks, public squares, sports pitches, community gardens, large street trees, hedgerows and so on. There will be a strong connection and interaction with the existing settlement to the north.

12.12 This will be achieved through the adoption and implementation of the following key development principles for the area:

- a. the creation of a rural/countryside feel for the area.
- b. pedestrian and cycle movement prioritised over vehicular movement.
- c. the provision of a wide range of green infrastructure including, for example, informal green spaces, parks, public squares, sports pitches, allotments or community gardens, the use of large trees and hedgerows.
- d. strong connections and access to and from the north of the area with the existing settlement of Saxmundham, and, to the south and east, providing non-motorised access routes towards Benhall.

12.13 It remains critical to the success of the Garden Neighbourhood that it should be seamlessly and successfully integrated with the existing community of Saxmundham. In order to create a full sustainable Garden Neighbourhood this integration needs to be:

- Physical – in terms of the relationship between the new development and the existing built-up area of the town, high quality connections –

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<sup>17</sup> based on those of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) – the original founders of the Garden City movement. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/the-foundations-of-the-garden-city-movement/>

pedestrian and cycle – to promote easy, safe and quick access between the town and the development and also between the development and the town’s facilities e.g. the town centre and the railway station.

- Environmental – in terms of high-quality green infrastructure connections, corridors and links between the Garden Neighbourhood and the town; and the Garden neighbourhood and the surrounding countryside; the design and layout of the Garden Neighbourhood to reflect local character.
- Social – a strong connection and interaction between the Garden Neighbourhood and the rest of the town, services to meet the needs of local people, provision of primary school and early years facilities, housing that provides for a mixed and balanced community and ensure integration and cohesion between new and existing communities.

12.14 Saxmundham Town Council believes that any future development in the Garden Neighbourhood site should take the name of the site literally and aim to create a predominantly green character for the area, e.g. through its overall design, layout, landscaping, public facilities and green spaces and infrastructure.

### Connecting the Garden Neighbourhood

12.15 The success of the Garden Neighbourhood, for its residents and for the town of Saxmundham, depends to a large degree on (a) how well it is physically accessible to and integrated with the town, offering seamless, easy-to-navigate routes, (b) how well it provides for excellent connections and movement within the Neighbourhood and c) how well the employment areas are connected to the Garden Neighbourhood and also to the countryside beyond. The development proposals for the Garden Neighbourhood (to be master-planned with full community engagement) are required to ensure that excellent connectivity is provided: (a) between the existing town and the Garden Neighbourhood, (b) within the Garden Neighbourhood itself, c) between the residential areas of the Garden Neighbourhood and the proposed employment and commercial areas west of the A12, and (d) between the Garden Neighbourhood and Benhall.

12.16 The only vehicular access route to and from the Garden Neighbourhood to the existing town is indirect, via the A12. Due to this single vehicular access, the success of the site is significantly dependent upon reducing/minimising car use and maximising other forms of transport, such as public transport and community transport to ensure less congestion and safe traffic flow.

Convenient and attractive, direct, well sign-posted pedestrian and cycle connections to the town (including town centre, station, residential areas and employment areas) must be provided sufficient in number and of high enough quality if they are to be a realistic alternative. Such links will also serve to further other aims, including promoting health and well-being. However a number of key accesses, which could achieve this, are not in the same landownership as the Garden Neighbourhood site and therefore not within the control of the developer e.g. land to the west side of the school and land at the cemetery.

### Connecting the Garden Neighbourhood to the existing town and community

12.17 Fundamental to the success of the development of the Garden Neighbourhood is to ensure that the local community can access existing town-based services and facilities as well as those which will be created over the plan period, e.g. the new primary school. At least three – and if practicable four - new and/or upgraded connections are required:

- a. to the station,
- b. to the town centre,
- c. to existing residential area to the north-west of the Garden Neighbourhood site, via the existing footpath to the east of the former school, and also
- d. (so far as practicable) via a direct link to Lincoln Avenue and Seaman Avenue.

12.18 The most direct link to the station is via the eastern edge of the cemetery (via a new cycle/footpath) and on to the road network. Creating this link is seen as essential. The shortest link to the town centre and its facilities, including its supermarkets, is via the existing footpath over the railway bridge down to South Entrance, which will need to become a cycle path. The junction with South Entrance (B1121) should be improved to ensure safe transition to the road network. It is also essential to provide easy non-vehicular access to and from the adjacent residential areas to the northwest of the site. This access is already envisaged via an upgrade to the existing footpath to the east of the old school site, which is due to continue as a cycle path, through the (to be developed) former Fromus Centre site to Seaman Avenue. More direct links are potentially available e.g. to/from Lincoln Avenue but realising these would require discussion with the relevant land owners of the access strips of land.

## **Connections and movement within the Garden Neighbourhood**

12.19 The creation of the Garden Neighbourhood provides the opportunity to encourage and facilitate use of sustainable transport, in particular walking and cycling, and to promote exercise for health and well-being. Connections within the Garden Neighbourhood in particular, including a central cycle/pedestrian avenue running from the northeast of the site, around the site and into and out of the Garden Neighbourhood, including to the town centre itself, should create places that are safe, secure and attractive to users. This is not just in terms of their visual quality, but also in terms of their scope to minimise conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles by avoiding unnecessary street clutter which reflects local character and design standards.

## **Connections between the residential areas of the Garden Neighbourhood , the proposed employment area west of the A12 and to the wider countryside**

12.20 To ensure that all areas of the Garden Neighbourhood are well-integrated and that the wider strategic connections between the existing town and the countryside are enhanced, pedestrian and cycle crossings of the A12 will be required as follows:

- a. New pedestrian, cycle and road crossing of the A12 to the employment land.
- b. An enhanced pedestrian and cycle crossing from the strategic footpath and central cycle route running through the new neighbourhood and connecting to the countryside west of the A12.

12.21 Policy SAXGN1 below has been developed to take account of these issues.

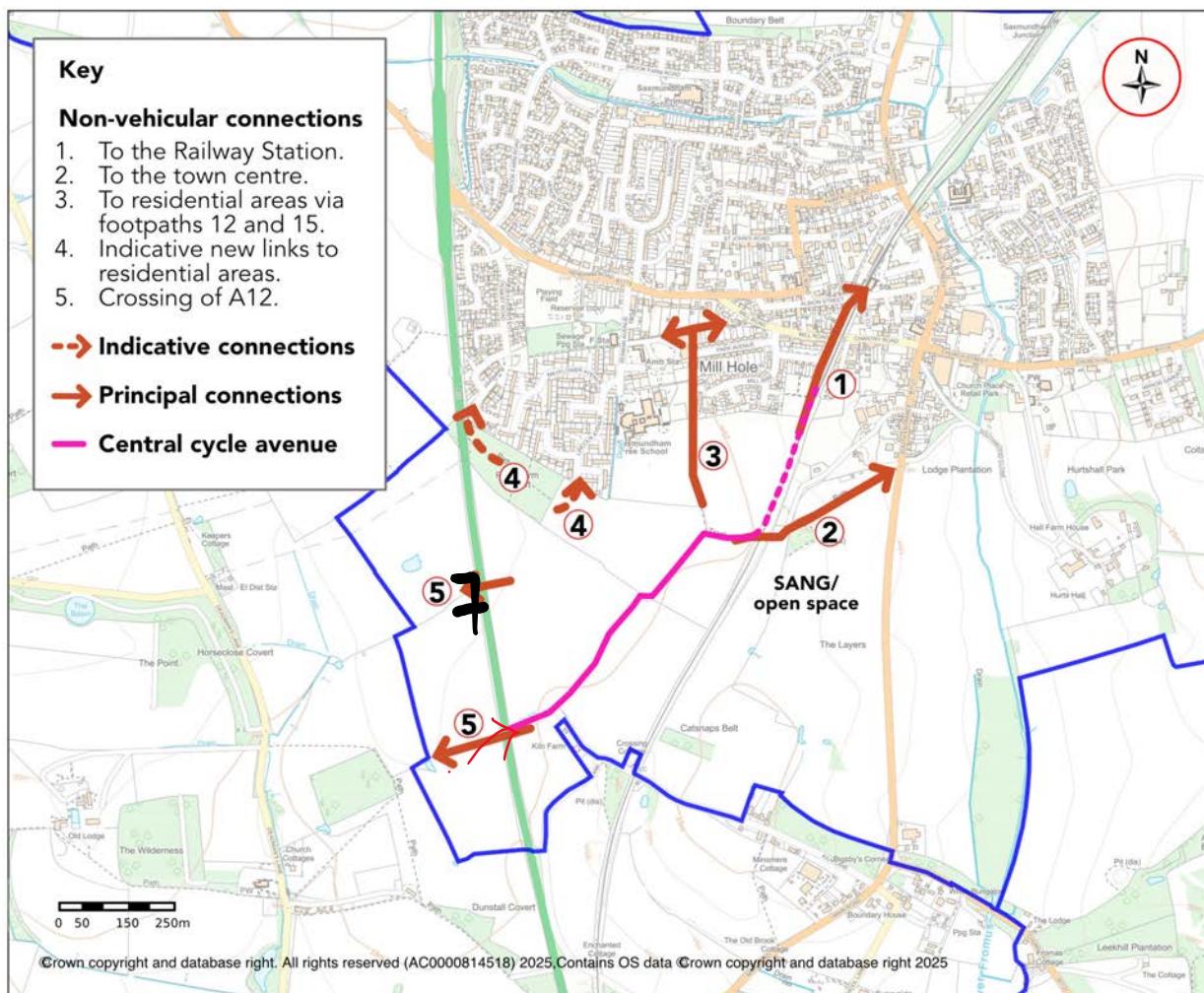


Figure 34: Connections (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

**POLICY**

**SAXGN1: Connecting the Garden Neighbourhood**

Development proposals for the Garden Neighbourhood will be expected to ensure that excellent connectivity is provided for all users, including those with a mobility impairment, in particular:

- between the existing town and the Garden Neighbourhood,
- within the Garden Neighbourhood itself, and
- between the residential areas of the Garden Neighbourhood, the proposed employment area west of the A12 and to the wider countryside.

Pedestrian and cycle movement between the Garden Neighbourhood and the existing town is prioritised over vehicular movement through the provision of

connections, sufficient in number and of the highest quality. They must be convenient and direct, in order to reduce reliance on private motor vehicles.

This provision will be in the form of well designed, attractive and safe to use (including appropriate lighting), new pedestrian and cycle linkages and the enhancement of existing routes including making new connections and links where appropriate. New cycle linkages to be built to the standards set in LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design.<sup>18</sup> Such links will be implemented at the outset of the development (Phase 1) prior to the occupation of new dwellings.

### **Connecting the Garden Neighbourhood to the existing town and community**

New and enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections should include:

- i. Connection between the Garden Neighbourhood and the railway station. This should be achieved through a new cycle and pedestrian route from the development via the cemetery along the west side of the railway, or another route offering similar direct linkage.
- ii. Connections between the Garden Neighbourhood and the town centre (including supermarket area). This should be achieved through an improved cycle and pedestrian route to and from south entrance, up to the existing bridge (where cyclists would dismount and use the footpath over the railway) to provide easy and swift access to and from shops and facilities. The existing railway bridge should be enhanced as a footpath and where practicable to also include a cycleway.
- iii. Connections to the surrounding residential areas and schools. These should be achieved via:
  - a. the existing footpath to the east of the former school playing field (footpaths 12 and 15 Saxmundham), upgraded appropriately, and leading to and from Seaman Avenue and Mill Road, and
  - b. (as far as practicable), a new cycle and pedestrian route to the west of the school playing field which would forge a strong connection with the existing residential communities to the south and west of the Memorial Field (Montagu Drive, Gilbert Road, Franklin Road, Drake Close, Mayflower Avenue and Lincoln Avenue) together with access to and from other residential areas beyond.

<sup>18</sup> Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>.



Improvements, such as those above, to pedestrian and cycle connections will continue to be sought, where appropriate, from future developments to support the delivery of safer and more attractive options for local travel.

### **Public Transport (including community transport)**

iv. The site access must be able to accommodate buses to easily serve the site including bus linkages to the town centre and supermarket area including consideration to be given to the potential to connect with Seaman Avenue west of the school site. New bus stops should be provided within easily accessible locations.

### **Connections and movement within the Garden Neighbourhood**

Proposals for development of the Garden Neighbourhood should promote the use of sustainable transport modes, as appropriate, including for exercise for health and well-being, as set out below:

- v. The layout should integrate existing public rights of way with new green links to encourage walking and cycling within the area, thereby reducing the reliance on cars within the Garden Neighbourhood, given the singular vehicle access proposed from the A12.
- vi. A central cycle avenue running through the residential areas, which uses the existing public footpath network and runs alongside the green corridor, and extended to the cemetery, should be provided linking to the Public Rights of Way network across the A12.
- vii. The provision of a circular green route is encouraged around the main housing areas of the site between the railway line and the A12 for use by pedestrians.
- viii. Good quality walking and cycling links to and from Benhall, utilising and improving existing Public Rights of Way, should be created
- ix. The existing rail crossing bridge and footpath shall be retained and upgraded for safe cycle and pedestrian use and access to the main SANG area.

### **Connections between the residential areas of the Garden Neighbourhood to the proposed employment area west of the A12 and to the wider countryside.**

- x. Safe connections for all users should be provided between the residential areas of the Garden Neighbourhood and the proposed employment area west of the A12, linking to the countryside beyond.
- xi. Where new routes are to be provided and existing routes enhanced, careful consideration should be given to ensure their safety and



attractiveness, for all users and for adjacent occupiers. Proposals should seek to minimise light pollution whilst ensuring that routes are safely lit and attractive to users.

## Green infrastructure

12.22 The successful integration of the Garden Neighbourhood into the wider area and its acceptance by the wider community will no doubt be influenced by how well it is considered to live up to its name and also how engaged the community has been in the collaborative masterplanning process. A key indicator of this will be the quality and quantity of green infrastructure that is provided both within and at the edge of the Garden Neighbourhood development. Within the site, as much as possible of the existing hedgerows and other green infrastructure should be preserved.

12.23 New Green links will be required along the edges of the site to create green corridors, mitigate any noise disturbance and connect with surrounding assets (countryside, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), existing settlement, High Street). The Local Plan proposes that the area east of the railway but adjacent to the town, is for 'open space' and SANG (with some to remain in existing agricultural use) in order to have a positive impact on the environment. Footpaths and signage within the SANG will facilitate movement and attract people. Any new green links will help to encourage walking and cycling.

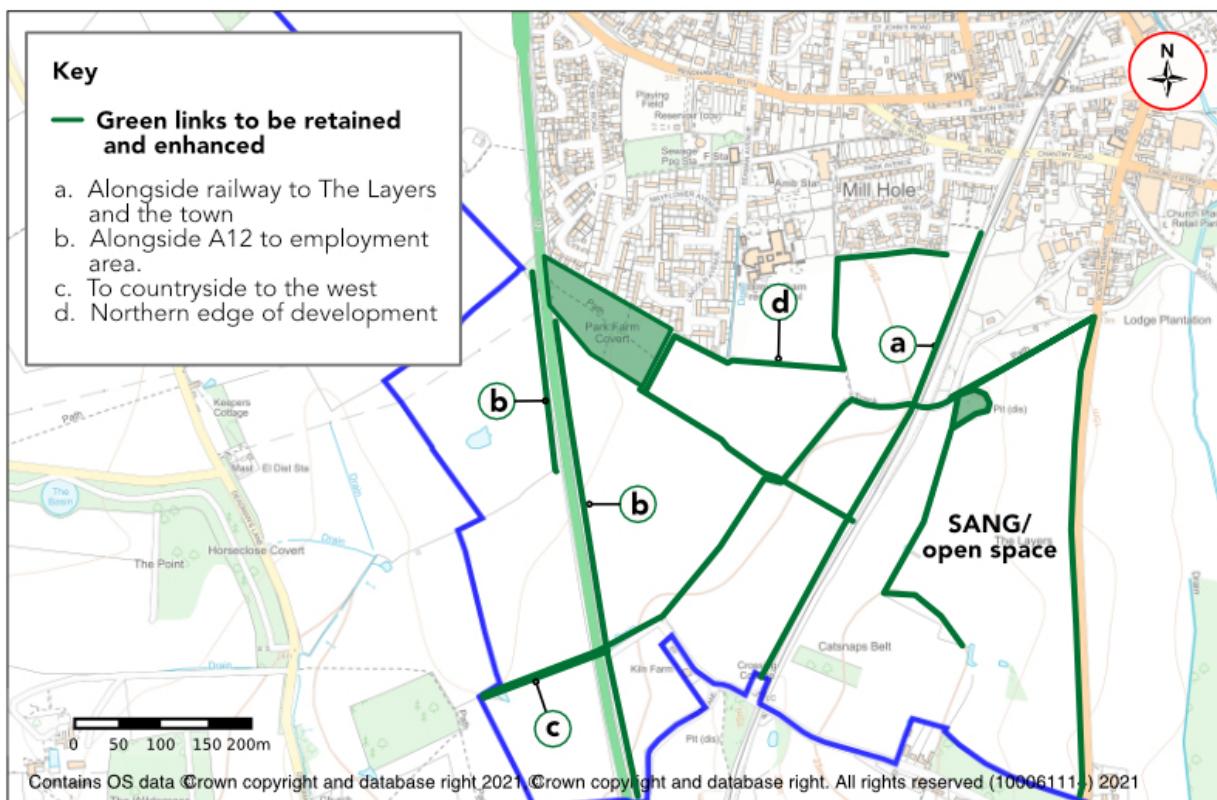


Figure 35: Green links (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

12.24 A range of green spaces will need to be provided for example, formal parks, play areas, a public square, informal greens, allotments or community gardens. Other facilities such as shelters, public toilets and other facilities may need to be investigated in some specific green spaces; and a circular green route around the main housing site would enhance the green 'feel' and promote walking and cycling. The use of Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) such as drainage lagoons, attenuation basins and swales should be used to provide drainage but also to provide benefits for biodiversity and landscape. Further guidance is included in East Suffolk's Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Healthy-Environments/Healthy-Environments-SPD-Adoption-version.pdf> and [Healthy-Environments-SPD-Adoption-version.pdf](https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Healthy-Environments/Healthy-Environments-SPD-Adoption-version.pdf)

**POLICY****SAXGN2: Green infrastructure**

The provision of high quality, well designed and accessible green infrastructure shall be provided to achieve a sustainable and integrated new neighbourhood.

New development within the Garden Neighbourhood should link the town and the new community through the use of green infrastructure. Development proposals which meet the following criteria will be supported:

- i. Green infrastructure links which connect to the wider countryside, to the west to the employment area, to the wider countryside and east to the Layers.
- ii. A well landscaped green corridor to be created along the northern boundary of the Garden Neighbourhood.
- iii. The area east of the railway line including The Layers is identified for the provision of open space and an appropriate area of well-designed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), to mitigate the potential impacts of recreational disturbance on the Special Protection Areas (see **Policy SAX16**). The land east of the railway, defined for these purposes, should be delivered as an integral part of the Garden Neighbourhood.
- iv. The existing hedgerow structure of the site should be retained insofar as it is practicable to do so, and this should influence the design and layout of the proposed housing areas. All existing trees, hedges, and hedgerows to be retained and incorporated into the design and layout of proposals, in so far as is reasonably practicable.
- v. Provision of significant landscaped area along the western boundary of the main housing site, adjacent to the A12, to provide a soft landscaped edge to the development and the opportunity for recreational pedestrian and cycle routes and noise mitigation.
- vi. New allotments, community gardens or community orchards should be provided within the new neighbourhood.
- vii. The inclusion of 'green corridors' to allow the passage of wildlife through and within the neighbourhood.
- viii. Green infrastructure should be provided on the proposed commercial/employment area to the west of the A12 which could include the enhancement of the existing pond on site, new hedgerows and new footpath connections to the wider countryside beyond.

ix. High-quality SuDS<sup>19</sup> provision should be made across the development that ensures green, open SuDS are provided within residential areas that integrates well into the green infrastructure. SuDS should enhance the amenity and biodiversity of all areas they are integrated, in addition to their functions of volume control and treatment.

## Community facilities

12.25 A range of requirements are highlighted in the Local Plan policy as needing to be delivered to support the growth of the Garden Neighbourhood. These are set out earlier. The Local Plan provides an indicative draft masterplan layout. The proposed community hub (or local centre) is shown as centrally located within the Garden Neighbourhood in the Local Plan. In order to function successfully as a hub the facility needs to relate well to and be easily accessible from the rest of the development, by all modes of transport. It is considered that there would be advantages for the more commercial parts of the 'local centre' to be located next to the main vehicular entrance to the site, close to the A12, welcoming visitors and residents, including those from the employment areas. It will need to serve as a local shopping function, with open spaces and visitor facilities, in a location where it can be easily seen from the main road (A12) attracting drivers passing by and enhancing viability. A separate 'community hub' would be provided elsewhere in the site which could take the form of an outdoor meeting space, or well-designed focal point and potentially including a community café.

12.26 There is no specific location for the new primary school indicated in the Local Plan. However the former secondary school site is located immediately north of the proposed Garden Neighbourhood and there is some logic that would support locating the primary school close to that facility particularly if the site were to be retained in some form of community or educational use such as a SEND School and/or facilities for indoor sports and recreation. The location of the primary school in this area would also mean it is within easy walking distance from the existing and the new communities.

12.27 Community consultation undertaken as part of the production of the Made Neighbourhood Plan revealed that indoor sports provision and additional medical facilities were the key priorities for future development to provide.

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<sup>19</sup> See glossary for SuDS definition

Paragraph 3.32 of the Local Plan acknowledges that consultation on the Local Plan highlighted the need for improvements to the capacity of the medical practice. Given the priority that the community ascribes to these two issues, the Town Council will continue to lobby for the delivery of proposals to address both to ensure that the development of the Garden Neighbourhood responds positively to the community and maximises the opportunity (including that presented by the availability of the former secondary school site), to provide indoor sports facilities where they can easily serve the new and existing communities (see also **Policy SAX5**).

12.28 The town has outdoor sports facilities at the northern end of the town, at the Sports and Recreational Club at Carlton Park. However, it has no indoor sports provision of any kind. The provision of an indoor sports centre facility, in the southern area of the extended town, and reasonably accessible to residents of both the new Neighbourhood and of the existing town, would provide a much-needed resource, help to promote healthy lifestyles, and assist in the aim of integrating the new development in the community life of the town.

POLICY

**SAXGN3: Community facilities**

The creation of the new Garden Neighbourhood will be supported by the provision of the following important community infrastructure.

**Primary school and associated early years setting**

Consideration to be given to being located to the north of the site to allow for physical and social connectivity with the existing community affording opportunities to enhance the proposed green corridor in the north of the site (see **Policy SAXGN2 ii** above). Both facilities to be accessible by high quality walking and cycling routes.

**Second Early Years Setting (of approximately 0.1hectares)**

To be suitably located, to ensure good coverage of childcare across the Garden Neighbourhood and to ensure that early-years settings can be sustainable in the long term; and to be accessible by high quality walking and cycling routes.

**Community hub**

To be located where it can best meet the needs of residents of the neighbourhood and the communities beyond. Located preferably with good connections to the primary school, with easy access from all parts of the new neighbourhood, including the employment area. This would also allow for existing and proposed green links to come through the local centre creating a well-connected network.

**Recreational facilities including play areas**

To be located across the development and catering for different age groups.

Proposals for otherwise acceptable, additional **indoor sports provision** within the Garden Neighbourhood including those which utilise the former secondary school site will be strongly supported. Such facilities should be easily accessible from both the town and the Garden Neighbourhood by high quality walking and cycling routes (see also **Policy SAX5**).

## Design of the Garden Neighbourhood

12.29 **Policy SAX1** of the made Neighbourhood Plan sets out the general design principles which all new development in the parish should have regard to. This



also includes the detailed guidance set out in the Design Guidelines for the Neighbourhood Area which is included as **Appendix E** of this Modified Neighbourhood Plan.

- 12.30 The guidance is consistent with national design advice as outlined in the National Model Design Code, and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 12.31 The design principles contained in **Policy SAX1** can be easily applied to the Garden Neighbourhood Site, however this is relatively high level and the scale of development proposed in the Garden Neighbourhood also warrants some detailed guidance to ensure that the original objectives for the site, as set out in the Local Plan allocation, are met.
- 12.32 Policies SAXGN1 and SAXGN2 cover the strategic issues of connectivity and green infrastructure, whilst Policy SAXGN3 covers issues relating to community facilities within the Garden Neighbourhood. There remains a gap in policy relating to the detailed design of the site which sits between the strategic guidance set out in **Policy SAX1** and any masterplan for the site. The following policy aims to fill that gap.

### Design and the Garden Neighbourhood

- 12.33 The southern extent of the Neighbourhood Area, where the Garden Neighbourhood has been located, currently consists of open fields, woodlands and water elements. New development should take the existing local character of wider Saxmundham into careful consideration. The design of the Garden Neighbourhood should consider scale, layout, density, mass, materials and architectural features, as well as incorporate a high standard of landscaping to add to the quality of the area. The existing building typologies in the parish can also be reflected in the new development where this provides a positive contribution to the new neighbourhood and existing character of Saxmundham. In particular, there is a variety of building types in the Neighbourhood Plan Area; for example terraced housing, semi-detached, detached and bungalows. It is important that this mixture of types of housing is retained and promoted in new development in order to create variety and interest in the streetscape. The architectural styles, details and materials of the existing Saxmundham settlement should act as a reference for the new development to promote local distinctiveness. The new development also offers a significant opportunity for more distinctive, innovative and contemporary approaches to design and architecture, within the overall mix of typologies. The aim is for the Garden Neighbourhood to be recognised as a

design leader in terms of sustainability, energy efficiency and technological advancement.

12.34 **Policy SAXGN4** below seeks to set out more tailored design guidance for the layout and design of the new garden neighbourhood and builds on the existing Neighbourhood Plan **Policy SAX1**, and the Design Code, to provide this.

**POLICY**

#### **SAXGN4: Design of the Garden Neighbourhood**

This development will be a very significant enlargement of Saxmundham and as such will be expected to be imaginative and innovative and make a positive contribution to the character of the town and the range of housing on offer. It should be a high quality, well designed, distinctive development which is physically, environmentally and socially well connected to the existing town and community of Saxmundham.

There are limited views from the town towards the site, however, the development of the site presents opportunities for original and contemporary design solutions as well as more traditional schemes.

The objective is for a distinctive, environmentally and technologically advanced development which will be an asset to the town of Saxmundham. To achieve this it is expected that standards of building, layout and design will exceed minimum standards.

Proposals for the Garden Neighbourhood should have regard to the design guidelines for the Neighbourhood Plan area, in **Appendix E**.

Proposals should, so far as relevant to the context, accord with the following criteria:

#### **STREET DESIGN AND PARKING**

##### **Layout**

1. The site should be developed as a series of neighbourhoods, each with its own distinctive character, in terms of layout, materials, building design and public realm detailing. The whole to be drawn together and connected by the diagonal cycleway/footpath.



2. The central cycle/footpath avenue through the Neighbourhood including associated landscaping and public open space is to be designed as a whole and form a principal component of the layout.
3. Green verges should be provided along the main street with large street trees to provide shading and create a 'garden' neighbourhood feel. These verges should also be integrated into the SuDS strategy to provide multifunctional benefits.
4. Where appropriate, on-street parking should be interspersed with trees to avoid impeding moving traffic or pedestrians and also mitigate the visual impacts of vehicles.
5. Front gardens should be provided; they are a key element which contribute to the openness of the streetscape with rich vegetation and planting. Use of front gardens as additional car parking should be discouraged.
6. Corner buildings should function as landmarks to create memorable routes.
7. Cul-de-sacs should be avoided but where they are proposed these should be connected to the footpath network in the area through pedestrian orientated routes.
8. When a street is proposed adjacent to the countryside or a large open space, a sensitive landscaping scheme should be developed to enable transition and control pedestrian accessibility. Such landscaping could also be used for swales, rain gardens and small attenuation features to contribute to a high-quality SuDS.
9. The use of hedgerows where dwellings or streets face onto agricultural land is particularly encouraged.

#### ***Car and cycle parking***

10. Residential parking should be provided on plot and to the side, with convenient Electric Vehicle charging points in preference to rear parking courts. Garages should be sized in accordance with Suffolk parking standards.
11. Car parking design should be combined with meaningful landscaping a minimum of every 4<sup>th</sup> parking space to minimise the presence of vehicles.
12. Parking should be placed in well overlooked areas., Where rear parking courts are proposed, these should be secure and active frontages provided where possible. Flats over garages (FOGs) is one way in which this could be achieved. Parking should not dominate the street scene.

13. Parking areas and driveways should be designed to minimise water run off through the use of raingardens, tree pits and permeable paving.
14. The provision of secured covered cycle parking within all residential developments is encouraged.
15. Encouragement is also given for publicly available cycle parking in the public realm.

#### ***Landscaping and tree planting***

16. Mixed native, hedgerows can be planted in front of bare boundary walls to ease their visual presence, or they can be used to conceal on plot car parking and driveways within curtilages.
17. Where flower beds, bushes and trees are to be planted within front gardens, ornamental species add interest and colour to their surroundings and become an identity and character to individual dwellings.
18. Trees should be added to any public open space, green or play area to generate environmental and wildlife benefits.

#### ***Lighting***

19. Any new development shall ensure that lighting schemes will not cause unacceptable levels of light pollution particularly in intrinsically dark areas of the countryside but must be adequate to ensure a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists in the dark. Lighting and light levels should be minimised to 3000K or below (i.e. on the warmer spectrum of light, while delivering the same illumination. The use of lighting, such as blue LED light, which has a negative effect on biodiversity,<sup>20</sup> health and wellbeing, should be avoided.

#### ***Mitigating the impact of the A12***

20. Where new dwellings are proposed close to the A12, suitable noise mitigation measures should be employed. The road edge should be softened with planting, and dwellings should be orientated such that habitable rooms and gardens are located furthest from the noise sources. Where apartments are provided in areas at risk from noise impact, the apartments are dual-aspect. Noise attenuating road surfaces should be incorporated.

<sup>20</sup> The Institute of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 08/23 - Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night is where guidelines for artificial lighting for bats can be found.



### ***Mitigating the impact of the railway line***

21. Layouts adjacent to the railway line should incorporate planting for noise mitigation. A landscaped pedestrian path should also be provided, as part of the proposed circular route around the entire site, which will add additional noise mitigation. Dwellings should be orientated with habitable rooms located furthest from the railway line. Where apartments are provided in areas at risk from noise impact, the apartments are dual-aspect.

## **BUILT FORM AND BUILDING DESIGN**

22. Buildings should be fronted onto streets and maximise passive building design (see paragraph 34). Building lines will vary according to the relevant character area.
23. Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be ensured by placing ground floor habitable rooms and windows facing the street. Windows should be used to increase the natural surveillance of the public realm and enhance the attractiveness of the street scene. They should be constructed using sustainable materials. Corner buildings should incorporate windows on both primary and secondary facades. Long stretches of windowless walls should be avoided. Windows should be of sufficient size and number to allow an abundance of light.
24. New buildings should be sympathetic in mass, height and scale to the rural location. Subtle variation in height is encouraged to add visual interest. Buildings reflecting the local vernacular should avoid pastiche.
25. Services and utilities such as meter boxes, guttering, drainpipes and EV chargers should be carefully located to avoid visual clutter on the front of buildings.
26. Driveways, paths and pavements should use materials which are robust, aesthetically pleasing and with excellent weathering characteristics, defining a sustainable and attractive place for residents and visitors.
27. Materials for new buildings should be of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness. Materials should be selected based on an understanding of the local built and natural environment including those materials which have less embodied carbon.

### ***The Employment Area***

28. The Employment Area is an integral part of the Garden Neighbourhood and as such should have commensurate levels of high-quality landscaping, a green infrastructure network and easily signed access to the wider countryside.
29. Employment buildings should have a high level of energy efficiency and incorporate design features where practicable such as ground and air source heat pumps. Roofs should maximise solar panel gains. They should be of contemporary design with a variety of buildings of limited height, designed with flexibility in mind to address a range of commercial uses to ensure their compatibility with the Garden Neighbourhood.

### ***Environmental and Energy design***

30. Energy efficient and eco design features should be incorporated into all developments at the design stage and include such elements as triple glazing, above standard insulation, grey water capture, air source heat pumps, and mechanical ventilation heat recovery (HVHR). Solar conversion materials (panels, shingles, integrated solar roof tile systems etc.) should be included in the design of all buildings, similarly satellite dishes or other external features should be included at the design stage and positioned unobtrusively.
31. Elements such as water management features, flood resilience and resistance features and energy efficiency features are to be included. The use of renewable/non carbon energy solutions such as air and ground source heat pumps, district heating and solar panels are essential throughout. Developers are encouraged to provide a commitment to the operational targets of the new homes which should be consistent with the LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide.
32. Buildings should be orientated and designed to manage solar gain, daylight and sun penetration, whilst avoiding overheating.
33. All dwellings should be provided with an EV charger.

### ***Innovative and contemporary building design***

34. Innovative and contemporary design solutions of high quality (including self-build housing), where they also exemplify high standards of sustainability in environmental and energy design, will generally be supported. These may where appropriate form part of character areas within which they may offer a design contrast to other buildings that adds to the overall positive design impact.

### **Gateways**

35. The pedestrian/cycle access points linking the new development to the existing town are important gateways into the Garden Neighbourhood and should be designed to take advantage of the opportunities that these give to create distinctive, welcoming spaces and creative physical design elements. The entry points to the development site from the Railway Station, and from the town via the single-track railway bridge, are particularly important in this respect. The vehicular access into the neighbourhood should be attractive, inviting and well signposted.

### **Density**

36. Densities should be sensitive to Saxmundham and its context. Subtle differences in densities within character areas will be tolerated, provided that they are in keeping with the wider context. The highest densities should in general be positioned at the north of the site, adjacent to the existing town settlement and progressively lower densities created towards the southern boundary to provide a soft, green transition between development and countryside.

### **Waste and Recycling Storage**

37. All residential properties should be designed with convenient, secure, and visually unobtrusive storage for general waste and recycling bins. Bin storage areas should be located away from the primary street frontage where possible and screened using planting, fencing, or built enclosures that are in keeping with the overall design of the development. Provision should also be made for accessible collection points that do not obstruct pavements, and consideration should be given to 'bin drag distances',<sup>21</sup> the gradient and surfacing to ensure ease of movement for residents and waste collection services.

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<sup>21</sup> Guidance from Suffolk Waste Partnership



# 13. Mitigating the impacts of National Infrastructure and Energy Projects

**Objective EN1: To ensure that the necessary measures required to mitigate the physical, visual, social and biodiversity impacts of National Infrastructure and Energy Projects are identified and implemented.**

- 13.1 Areas of East Suffolk have been identified for a number of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects also known as NSIPs. These relate to national scale projects brought about by the significant generation and connection infrastructure required to deliver net zero carbon emissions in the UK by 2050. The resources and conditions in East Suffolk for fixed foundation offshore wind and interconnectors have made the area favourable to developers. Concerns have been raised about the significant number of projects proposed for the area and their cumulative impact.
- 13.2 NSIPs by their very definition are significant in scale and also in impact. Proposals for such developments are determined by the Secretary of State as advised by the Planning Inspectorate. The NSIP process is a prescribed process and is set out in regulation<sup>22</sup>. The District Council, County Council and Saxmundham Town Council are statutory consultees (along with a range of organisations including the environmental bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England). Decisions on such projects are made at a national level; however the Secretary of State (SoS) must have regard to any Local Impact Report (LIR) submitted when deciding the application. The County and District Councils will each (or jointly) produce a Local Impact Report on each NSIP in their administrative boundaries. As per the Planning Inspectorate's advice note for Local Authorities<sup>23</sup>, the LIR is expected to contain (amongst other matters) an appraisal of the project's compliance with all relevant local planning policy and guidance. Once made,

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/introduction-to-national-infrastructure-planning-guidance>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/major-infrastructure-projects-including-nsips>



the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the local development plan and will thus be included in the LIR.

- 13.3 The Local Plan contains policy SCLP3.4: Proposals for Major Energy Infrastructure. The policy sets out the approach to be taken by East Suffolk to such applications either in its role as determining authority for development under the Town and Country Planning Act, or as consultee on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. The policy indicates that the Council will take into consideration the nature, scale, extent and potential impact of proposals for Major Energy Infrastructure Projects, including cumulative impacts throughout their lifetime, including decommissioning of existing plant and facilities. Proposals for Major Energy Infrastructure Projects across the plan area and the need to mitigate the impacts arising from these will have regard to relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies, regarding environmental impacts such as landscape, wildlife, heritage, coastal erosion and floodrisk, highway safety, impacts of construction, economic benefits, decommissioning and restoration measures and the cumulative impacts.
- 13.4 There is a history of such developments in this area with the most notable being the Sizewell Nuclear Energy Site. Nuclear energy has been generated at Sizewell since the 1960's and the operation of the site will continue well beyond the plan period of the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan as a result of the separate operations that take place such as the decommissioning of Sizewell A and B and the construction of Sizewell C.

#### **Energy Projects either within or in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area**

- 13.5 There are a number of NSIPs proposed in East Suffolk which vary in terms of their form and impact on the Neighbourhood Area.

#### **Nuclear Power: Sizewell**

- 13.6 Although the main construction site for the Sizewell C nuclear reactors lies outside of the Neighbourhood Area, the construction phase was triggered in January 2024 and construction has commenced with enabling works.
- 13.7 The principal impacts for Saxmundham generated by Sizewell relate to construction traffic. This is in the form of vehicular construction traffic using the A12 and rail borne freight traffic using the line between Ipswich and Saxmundham then on to Sizewell. The impacts are in the form of noise and disturbance from increased road traffic and heavier vehicles using the A12 and



from the increase in nighttime rail movements which go directly through the town. Unfortunately, given that the Sizewell development has been consented the Neighbourhood Plan is not able to influence these matters through a Neighbourhood Plan policy. See also **Policy SAXGN4** on noise mitigation measures for Garden Neighbourhood.

### Off shore Wind Energy: East Anglia One North (EA1North) and East Anglia Two (EA2)

13.8 Scottish Power Renewables plans to develop two offshore wind farm projects off the east coast. These projects are in addition to the existing East Anglia One and East Anglia Three Projects. Both EA1North and EA2 will make landfall under Thorpeness Cliffs and two trenched cable corridors up to 100m wide side by side are to be constructed between landfall and Friston village via Sizewell and Aldringham. These projects do not require any construction or new development within the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Area although the cumulative impacts of construction traffic for these projects together with the Sizewell construction are of concern.

### Off-shore electricity interconnectors: Sea Link

13.9 This is a new proposed high voltage undersea electricity link between Suffolk and Kent being developed by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET). NGET has stated that the Sea Link project is required to add greater capacity to the electricity transmission network. The proposal includes onshore underground cabling, a substation at Friston and a converter station at Saxmundham. This proposed converter station is broadly in the same location as the converter station proposed for another project known as Lion Link but will be an additional structure. There does not appear to be proposals for co-location currently, i.e. it is understood that there would be two separate tall structures (one each for Sea Link and Lion Link) each with its large operational footprint.

13.10 The Sea Link proposal includes the Saxmundham converter station, and access including a bridge over the River Fromus. The River Fromus crossing would provide an access route to the converter station for construction vehicles and reduce construction traffic in Saxmundham. The bridge location has been amended in order to reduce the impact on trees to the east of the river but would mean it is closer to heritage assets south of Saxmundham e.g. Hurts Hall (Grade II Listed Building). The exact location of the compound has not yet been confirmed although it is likely to be close to the converter station. In

terms of mitigation Sea Link currently proposes a new area of agricultural land between Sternfield and Saxmundham, east of the River Fromus, to create small gaps in the crops so birds can access nesting habitats. An area of land near Aldeburgh, off the A1094 and within the National Landscape area, would also be included and is proposed to be managed 'acid grassland'. This is a type of open landscape and habitat that encourages biodiversity. It should be noted this area lies outside of the Neighbourhood Area for this Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Offshore electricity interconnectors: Lion Link**

13.11 The Lion Link Multi-Purpose Interconnector is being developed by National Grid Ventures. The Lion Link project involves the creation of a High Voltage Direct Current transmission cable between the UK and Netherlands. The operational 'footprint' for both projects is likely to be in excess of 3 hectares. Access to the converter station is likely to be from the B1121 to the south of Saxmundham, crossing the River Fromus south of Hurts Hall. The proposed location of the converter station is directly on a public right of way (Saxmundham 3). This proposed converter station is broadly in the same location as the converter station proposed for another project known as Lion Link but will be an additional structure. There appears to be proposals for co-location; it is understood that there would be two separate tall structures (one each for Sea Link and Lion Link) each with its large operational footprint.

13.12 The key issues for Saxmundham parish include traffic, operational impacts and construction impacts. These include the cumulative impacts in association with Sizewell C and EA1North and EA2 off shore wind projects and the impacts of the proposed converter stations itself.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

13.13 The impacts of Sea Link on Saxmundham will be in addition to the proposals for Lion Link (see 13.12) and the other energy projects shown above. Taken together, these proposed new converter station developments, in particular, unless well masked and mitigated, create a very large new industrial site and 'landscape' in a setting that historically has always been rural/agricultural in use and appearance.

13.14 The direct impacts on the town include the following:

#### **Construction Impacts**

- Noise



- Vibration
- Air pollution
- Dust
- Traffic congestion

### Operational Impacts

- Landscape
- Heritage
- Townscape
- Biodiversity
- Public Rights of Way

### Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan Policy

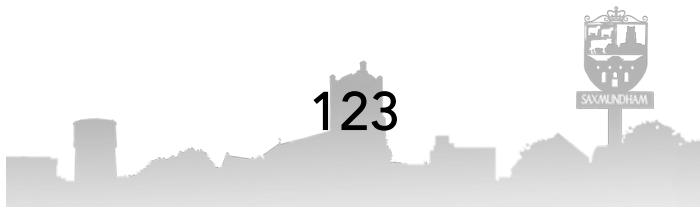
13.15 Consultations undertaken in respect of the various energy projects (and the response of the Town Council to them) indicate a level of concern from local residents about the scale and number of major energy projects proposed in and around the parish and their potential cumulative impacts on residential amenity and the natural and historic assets of the parish. These concerns not only relate to the major energy projects themselves but also to the associated onshore infrastructure required to connect them to the grid for example, cables, connectors, pylons, converter stations etc.

13.16 There is also arguably an increasing risk to the character of Saxmundham itself. Its existing reputation as a historic Suffolk market town and gateway to the east Suffolk coast with historic villages, national landscapes, heritage coast and important wildlife habitats is in danger of being superseded by that of a town under siege from large scale energy infrastructure, increased town centre congestion from traffic serving the various projects set in an industrialised landscape littered with energy infrastructure and related subsidiary buildings and structures.

13.17 Whilst some impacts may only be 'temporary' – i.e. digging up the required channels, laying cables and then covering over the excavations, these should also be taken into account and as long as the disturbed area is able to recover within a reasonable time, the emphasis must be on proper restoration. If the disturbance is longer-lasting or permanent, then policy of mitigating/ compensating as close as possible to the affected areas is critical.

13.18 The Modified Neighbourhood Plan, therefore, seeks to ensure that the cumulative impacts of multiple energy schemes on the Neighbourhood Area are taken into account by the relevant determining body. The Plan also seeks to ensure that where such energy schemes are identified as being likely to have adverse impacts on the parish, including the cumulative impacts from multiple schemes and their associated infrastructure, that those mitigations are prioritised and suitably located within the Neighbourhood Area. Whilst accepting that the determination of NSIPs lies outside of the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan, the principles of the mitigation hierarchy as applied to applications affecting biodiversity, namely Avoid-Mitigate-Compensate should be employed when considering the location of those mitigations.

13.19 In the light of these factors, it is considered necessary to include a policy which deals with the identified impacts. This could be achieved through the inclusion of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric to be used to demonstrate that, not only will there be no loss of the ecological value of habitats, but that a net gain will be provided. The statutory minimum net gain is 10% for most development, with NSIPs not required to deliver net gain until at least 2025.



**POLICY**

**SAXEN1: Addressing and mitigating the impacts of large scale energy projects**

The impacts on the Neighbourhood Area of major energy infrastructure projects and associated developments (e.g. projects for nuclear energy, off shore wind, interconnectors, pylons, converter stations, cable trenches, pipelines etc), including the cumulative impacts from multiple schemes should be given significant weight in the determination of such schemes.

Where adverse impacts from major energy schemes upon the Neighbourhood Area, or any part of it, are identified, e.g. on residential amenity, the landscape, historic environment, wildlife, ecology and nature recovery, appropriate measures of local mitigation (having effect within the Neighbourhood Area), and/or compensation, will be drawn up and recommended to the project promoter and/or other relevant authorities or bodies.

These measures will take into account the policies set out in this Neighbourhood Plan, the relevant matters set out in the Local Plan and those set out in Local Impact Reports of other levels of Suffolk's local authorities.

Such measures to be proposed – whether in relation to the construction, operation or decommissioning phases - may in particular include those for the purpose of:

- Protecting nearby residential neighbourhoods, so far as practicable, during construction, operation and decommissioning, from noise, dust, vibration or other disturbance or deleterious effects.
- Minimising and mitigating the adverse visual impacts of any relevant structures, e.g. converter stations, on the landscape, historic environment or urban settlement.
- Mitigating any increase in flood risk or pollution in respect of the River Frome, during construction, operation and decommissioning.
- Minimising and mitigating the adverse impacts on the natural environment, during construction, operation and decommissioning to wildlife and local biodiversity, noting that the standard biodiversity net gain metric of at least a minimum of 10% should be applied.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preventing or minimising adverse impacts on the town centre and residential areas from Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects related traffic during construction, operation and decommissioning.</li></ul>
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Where works take place which have temporary impacts and/or are for a temporary purpose, the emphasis should be placed on timely restoration, once works have been completed and/or the purpose of the works has been completed.

In addition, where mitigation is not possible, or is likely to be inadequate in addressing the full adverse impact of the works in question on the locality or some part of it, appropriate and proportionate compensation should be made to those affected.

### Specific mitigations for Saxmundham

13.20 Whilst not endorsing the energy infrastructure proposals in principle, the Town Council has sought to respond positively to the opportunities for securing mitigation and potential community benefits as a result of the detailed schemes, should it be determined that they go ahead. The presence of converter stations just outside the built settlement of Saxmundham will permanently alter the town and the nearby communities of Kelsale, Carlton, Benhall and Sternfield. It is recognised that there is no mitigation that can fully compensate for the ecological, physical and visual impacts on the natural and historic environment. The Town Council is working collectively with Councillors from Kelsale cum Carlton Parish Council and Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council, together with interested local residents.

13.21 The aim is to help develop a series of mitigatory proposals which can be supported by the energy project developers to increase community awareness of environmental issues and work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance the environment within the town and wider community, to support local environmental projects.

13.22 A number of specific mitigations/interventions have been identified; however, not all of these are appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan. However there are a number which have a land use implication and may be appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan and these are set out below.

### **a. Mitigating the visual and biodiversity impacts of the converter station(s)**

13.21 The area which includes the sites of the converter stations, the new access road and the bridge will suffer the most significant direct impacts on habitat due to:

- altered soil composition.
- increased stormwater run-off with vast areas of previously permeable landscape becoming covered with impermeable surfaces.
- destruction of irreplaceable established woodland and hedgerows and wildflower margins.

13.22 The converter stations will permanently alter the visual aesthetic of the area and take arable land out of production. There will be no direct benefits to the surrounding communities from the construction or running of this energy infrastructure project. The converter stations are expected to reach 26m in height and will be highly visible in the landscape from all directions. In order to mitigate their visual appearance, built footprint and scale in the landscape proposals for the converter station should be consistent with the following criteria:

- Consideration should be given to wholly or partially burying or lowering the converter station buildings to reduce their overall visible height and assist with their assimilation into the wider landscape.
- The exterior materials and colour should be chosen with landscape visibility in mind to reduce their overall effect.
- Opportunities to clad the external elevations of the buildings with 'vertical habitat cladding' should be considered. The most important elevations are those from the South Entrance to Saxmundham which is identified as an important public view in the made Neighbourhood Plan. This would provide new habitat for swifts, bats and pollinating insects.
- Where new roads or access routes are to be created to serve the converter stations. These should be constructed to adoptable standards suitable for future public use as a long-term relief road for the town - linking the B1121 (South Entrance) and the B1119 Leiston Road. This will ensure that if retained, post construction, they will help to reduce traffic congestion in the town centre.
- Hedgerows should be required to be planted both within the development site and adjacent, including along the affected section of the B1119 Saxmundham to Leiston Road, for environmental and landscaping purposes; in addition, also for these purposes, trees including copses should be planted within the development site as far as practicable, and/or in the immediate vicinity, to provide a legacy

that echoes the heritage of the Great Wood that formerly stood on or close to the main converter station site.

**b. Mitigating any increase in floodrisk or pollution to the River Fromus**

13.23 Development will be expected to manage all surface water runoff from impermeable surfaces through water harvesting solutions, attenuation ponds, swales and tree pits, raingardens and retention basins as appropriate. Where new roads (even temporary roads) are to be constructed these should establish swales and bioretention basins along all new roads to capture and treat water runoff to reduce flood risk and mitigate risk of pollution to the River Fromus.

**c. Mitigating the adverse impacts on biodiversity**

13.24 The compulsory purchase of the farmland for cable trenches provides an opportunity to repurpose the land for the amenity of the local community and create a Green Nature Corridor, potentially linked with the SANG which is to be delivered as part of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. The route of the cable trenches would allow for a completely hedgerowed and wild flower margined, accessible, safe, non-vehicular route. This access to nature would provide health and wellbeing benefits to the local communities. This Green Nature Corridor would be cycle/bridleway/mobility/disabled inclusive, offer tourism opportunities and provide connectivity for flagship Suffolk species to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths National Landscape. There are opportunities to create cycle connections with the railway station to provide sustainable wildlife friendly travel.

13.25 Opportunities also exist for the creation of a wildlife overpass as a Living Green Bridge over the River Fromus. This bridge is required to access and construct the converter stations. Following the completion of construction, the bridge will transition from construction route to rewilded overpass and therefore the initial bridge designs should reflect the later purpose. Whilst remaining an option for future access for maintenance, its main role will be to support wildlife. As with other bridges in the local area, the bridge will be built with an otter ledge to support their safe passage under the bridge.



## 14. Opportunity Zones: Saxmundham town centre

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- 14.1 Saxmundham town centre is the historic heart of the town. It includes the High Street, Market Place and parts of North and South Entrances, together with Station Approach, Street Farm Road and Fromus Square plus Church Street which now gives access to two supermarkets. This is the centre of the town's economic and business activity, where a good variety of facilities are found.
- 14.2 The town centre is not unlike most market towns in Suffolk in that it has a range of issues and challenges to face in terms of reinforcing the retail role of the town centre in a changing retail environment, maintaining a good quality and safe environment for people to shop in and visit but at the same time catering for the demands of those visitors and local residents and businesses in relation to issues of parking, HGVs, traffic congestion, pollution and pedestrian safety.
- 14.3 Saxmundham, however, does have some specific town centre issues of its own, which have been identified by the community through responses to consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan as it develops, and also reinforced as challenges by the technical work undertaken by AECOM.
- 14.4 The key physical and environmental issues for the town centre have been identified as:
  - Traffic congestion in the High Street.
  - Narrow carriageways making an unsafe pedestrian and cycle environment.
  - Lack of pedestrian crossings in the High Street.
  - Unauthorised on-street parking.

- Lack of coherent signage.
- Lack of connection between High Street and surrounding open spaces.
- Station Approach feels disconnected from the town centre.
- Poor visibility at key junctions.
- Narrow pavements along the High Street hinder pedestrian flow.
- Narrow, uneven and inadequate pavements affect mobility, particularly for those with mobility difficulties.
- Limited street furniture and green elements along the High Street.

14.5 The Town Council engaged consultants AECOM in early 2021, to produce a concept Master Plan for the High Street and present some potential options and opportunities for addressing these issues that the Town Council could then take forward.

14.6 The following set of primary objectives have been developed to guide the future of the town centre and the identified Opportunity Zones.

**Objective STC1:** To create an attractive and welcoming town centre with space to gather and socialise, with a pedestrian friendly environment stretching from the Station to Fromus Square and along the length of the High Street.

**Objective STC2:** To reduce the non-essential use of the High Street by motor vehicles and to prioritise pedestrian movement and safety in the centre, whilst improving and encouraging parking provision in accessible locations within walking distance of the town centre.

**Objective STC3:** To protect and enhance the historic core of the town as defined by the Conservation Area.

14.7 Due to the interdependency of various areas of the town centre, and the wide scope of potential actors involved in potential development proposals, it is important that proposals in this area are co-ordinated. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the town centre as an 'Opportunity Zone' and proposals within the zone should contribute to the overarching town centre strategy as set out in **Policy SAXTC1** below and should be delivered having regard to this Master Planning framework.

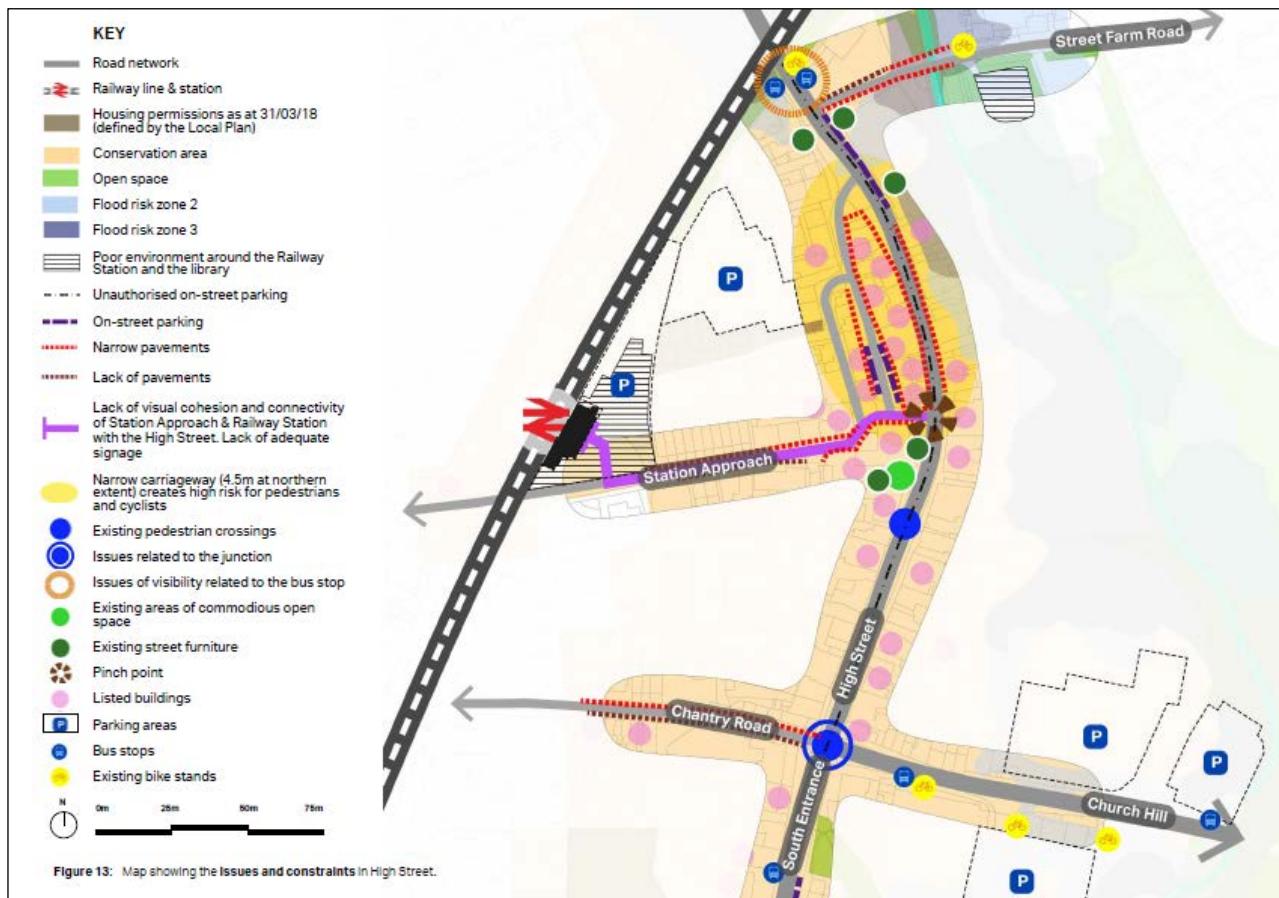


Figure 36: Issues and constraints around the High Street, Saxmundham (source: Concept masterplan for the High Street, AECOM).

POLICY

### SAXTC1: Town centre overarching strategy

Proposals will be supported that contribute to achieving a vibrant and bustling town centre comprising a healthy mix of retail, service sector, business, entertainment, cultural and residential uses.

Proposals should have regard to the advice contained within the Concept Masterplan for the High Street as set out in **Appendix F**.

Development proposals in and around the High Street will be supported where (if otherwise appropriate) they contribute to the following aims, as appropriate:

- a. Reinforce the area's distinctiveness and attractive character as a location where pedestrian activity is prioritised and users have a high sense of safety and belonging.
- b. Ensure the impact of vehicular traffic is relatively low and frontage servicing is minimised.
- c. Support good connectivity between the different areas of the town centre by creating a pedestrian friendly environment.
- d. Enhance the focal point around the Market Hall and The Bell Hotel as a desirable meeting place.
- e. Enhance of the appearance of the frontage of the Market Hall as an important landmark building, which contributes to the character of the town centre.

Development proposals that improve accessibility and safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other town centre users will be supported that:

- f. Provide parking within easy walking distance of the town centre to encourage walking.
- g. Improve provision for cyclists both in terms of access and for cycle parking.
- h. Enhance the visual appearance of the High Street through the use of an increased number of 'street trees.'

Proposals will not be supported where they would be detrimental to these aims.

See also **Policy SAX10: Historic Town Centre and Conservation Area**.



## Station area Opportunity Zone

**Objective STC4: To encourage the economic and environmental regeneration of the station area Opportunity Zone via a masterplan led approach, which encourages mixed-use development of underused and derelict land, and improves the attractiveness of Station Approach as a route for pedestrians and cyclists.**

- 14.8 Saxmundham Railway Station sits to the west of the High Street and is linked to it by Station Approach. This area creates the impression of being slightly disconnected from the town centre and has historically suffered from poor public realm, although some significant environmental improvements have recently taken place in the immediate Station environs which address the latter issue.
- 14.9 The Railway Station will be treated as another type of gateway into the town centre offering a pleasant and welcoming environment with appropriate signage to navigate people around. The station area has significant potential to improve car parking within the town. The Station parking and the District Council's car parking area to the north could be connected or merged to increase public parking capacity in the town centre and also free up the outdoor space in front of the Railway Station building. The level difference between the two car parking areas will need to be taken into account in the design.
- 14.10 The area also provides the opportunity for a public square at the Railway Station with seating areas, shops and information centre and could form part of a wider development opportunity.
- 14.11 There are also opportunities in this zone to promote the regeneration of areas of brownfield, and underused land. An area of land around the station bordered by St John's Road to the north, which includes land either side of the Railway line, the station area itself, the unpaved private car park and the current Saxmundham Town Council offices to the south off Station Approach has been identified in **Policy SAXSA1** below as an 'Opportunity Zone' which has the potential for a mixed development opportunity for a broad range of uses including, housing, commercial, community and retail uses, together with environmental and public realm improvements. Detailed proposals would need to come forward through a holistic masterplan process (for the whole or substantial part of the area) involving existing landowners and economic

operators, and with community engagement. The area is partly within, and otherwise abuts, the Conservation Area, and appropriate design will be fundamental to any proposals in this area.

**POLICY**

### **SAXSA1: Station area Opportunity Zone**

Development proposals in and around the station area (**figure 37**) should as appropriate, seek:

- i. To improve the overall setting of the station.
- ii. To enable people to easily transfer between sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling, bus, rail and taxi).
- iii. To improve bus and coach access to the station area with the longer-term aim to divert heavy traffic away from the narrow streets around the station.
- iv. To create public access from St John's Road to the Station.
- v. To contribute to the economic vitality and viability of the town.

Proposals that would result in visual and environmental improvements in this Opportunity Zone will be supported together with proposals that would increase connectivity with the town centre and the other areas of the town.

Support is given for proposals that would, as appropriate:

- a. Include public realm improvements, including improvements to the carriageway and the incorporation of traffic calming measures that would enable the creation of a more comfortable and welcoming space.
- b. Provide improved connectivity to the town centre (see also **SAXTC1c**).
- c. Provide for an outdoor meeting space/sitting space/public square adjacent to the railway station.
- d. Improve provision for cyclists, for example, by providing, safe, attractive and convenient links to the station, with secure and conveniently located cycle parking.
- e. Include new mixed uses (including commercial/office/workshops) and an information point adjacent to the railway station.
- f. Improve access to the station area for buses and coaches.
- g. Include visual improvements to the area in the form of increased provision of street trees, use of soft landscaping and rationalised signage.
- h. Improve directional signage to link the railway station and the town centre for pedestrians.



### Mixed-use development opportunity

The Station Area Opportunity Zone, (figure 38) will be enhanced as a gateway to the town and promoted as a key development opportunity for mixed uses including housing, commercial and community uses. Subject to Master Planning, proposals for the development and enhancement for part or the whole of the area will be welcomed.

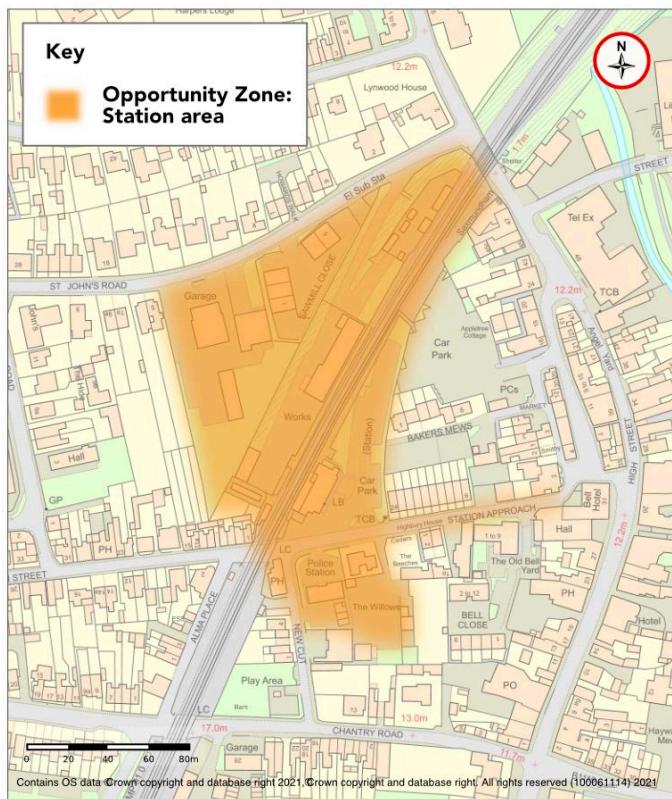


Figure 37: Station area Opportunity Zone (source: Parish Online with own annotations).

### Street Farm Road Opportunity Zone

14.12 Street Farm Road lies to the north-east of the town centre and east of the railway line. The junction of Street Farm Road with the High Street is dominated by the former Royal Mail/BT building which sits on the south of the junction and fronts onto the High Street. On the north side of the junction is the Saxmundham Hand Car Wash which uses a range of buildings that were formerly part of the Bus Garage and a yard accessed from the High Street.

14.13 Street Farm Road is a narrow road of uncertain land ownership which runs east from the High Street along the side of the Royal Mail building. To the rear of the car wash is the library, forming part of the buildings owned and operated by Suffolk County Council, and immediately opposite, between the Royal Mail

building and the Fromus Veterinary Group, is an area of undeveloped land owned by BT Openreach which is largely used as a temporary materials store and for informal car parking. These areas are identified as an Opportunity Zone with some potential for development particularly if that would bring about visual enhancements to the area. Both areas have some potential for flooding and therefore any proposals would need to take account of this.

14.14 The zone's location at the north end of the town centre and its visual prominence at the junction of the High Street, indicate that it could be suitable for a development comprising public car parking at the front and commercial and employment uses to the rear. It also offers scope for environmental and visual improvements.

14.15 The area opposite the library that is currently used as a materials store has significant potential to provide an overall visual and environmental enhancement to the area due to its proximity to the riverside walk and offering potential as open space and recreational benefits associated with the riverside. The area could easily provide a flexible communal space for events and picnics together with significant environmental benefits in the form of a visual enhancement to the area through public realm improvements, structural planting and landscaping.

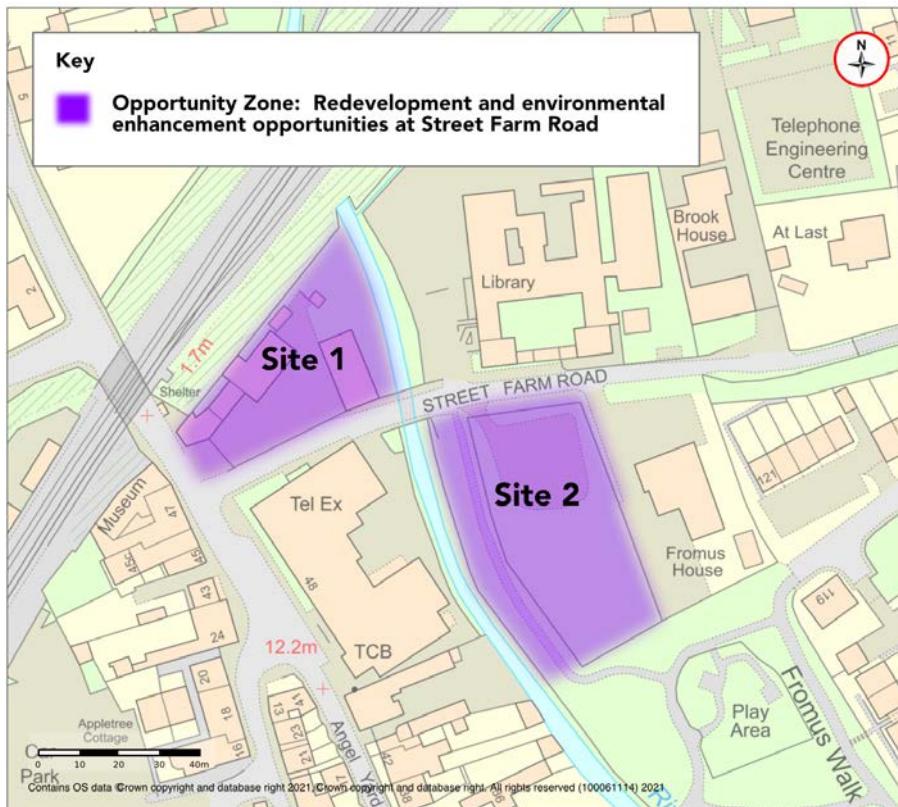


Figure 38:  
Development and  
environmental  
enhancement  
opportunities at Street  
Farm Road  
Opportunity Zone  
(source: Parish  
Online with own  
annotations).

## POLICY

**SAXSFR1: Street Farm Road Opportunity Zone**

Two areas are identified in Street Farm Road as having the potential to provide for development and environmental enhancement which would improve the visual appearance and character of the area (**figure 38**):

- **Site 1:** the site of the former Bus Garage, currently used as a hand car wash, is identified for development consisting predominantly of the provision of public car parking (including provision for electrical car charging) to serve the town centre at the front of the site, with commercial and employment uses to the rear.
- **Site 2:** the site opposite the library and currently used as a material store and informal car parking, is identified as a flexible community open space with links to the riverside walk providing environmental and visual enhancements.

**Fromus Square Opportunity Zone**

14.16 Fromus Square is set well back and east of the High Street, adjacent to the Waitrose supermarket on Church Street. It provides a pedestrian 'cut through' from the Waitrose car park fronting Church Street, along the side of the supermarket building and onto the High Street. The area is not visually prominent and as it does not have a street frontage is potentially considerably underused. It is not sign-posted from either direction nor does the visual appearance of its direct access onto the High Street encourage pedestrians to use it. The area has archaeological potential, and there is high potential for the discovery of below ground heritage assets within the site. Proposals for development here may need to secure a programme of archaeological investigation and reporting. In addition the area lies within an area of flood risk which will also need to be taken into account.

14.17 However it does provide a potentially attractive, area for retail or hospitality together with a safe and useable community space with a pedestrian priority. It has recently attracted important new retail and hospitality businesses. The area is identified as an Opportunity Zone which could accommodate a range of events including market stalls and seasonal events but could also be suitable for outdoor seating and dining for uses such as cafes, bars restaurants or galleries. The area would benefit from public realm improvements such as

planting and paving, together with better signage and connections to enhance its presence and encourage users to find it.

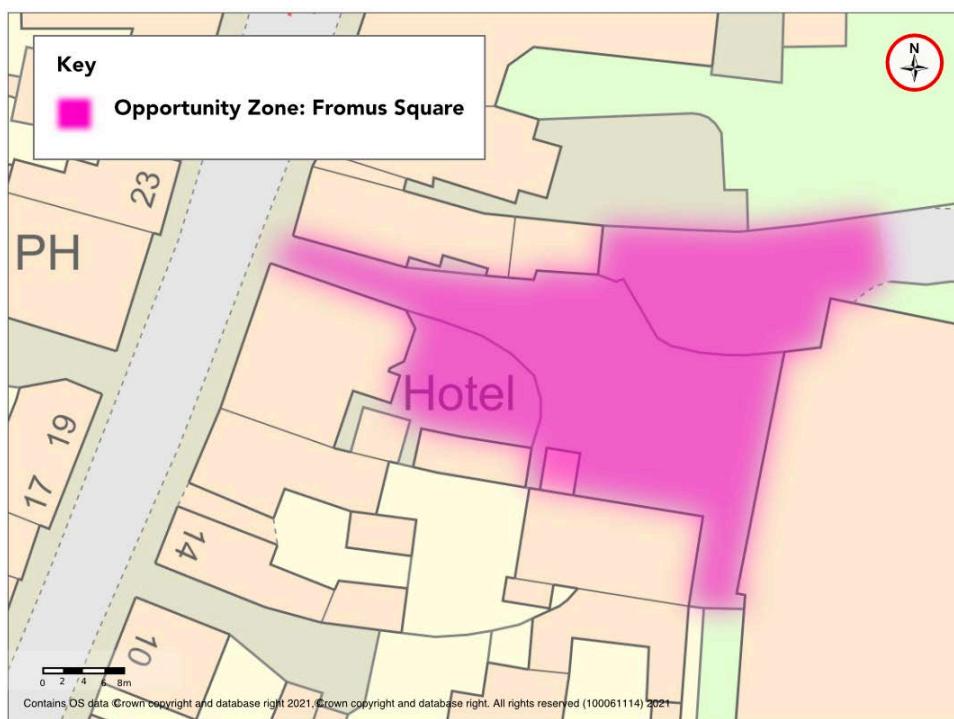


Figure 39:  
Fromus Square  
Opportunity  
Zone (source:  
Parish Online  
with own  
annotations).

**POLICY**

**SAXFS1: Fromus Square Opportunity Zone**

Proposals that would provide environmental and visual enhancements (including hard and soft landscaping improvements) to the overall character of Fromus Square (figure 39) will be supported.

Proposals which would enhance the retail, hospitality and leisure use of the area, whilst preserving its character, including those for provision of retail, restaurant, café/bar use, and/or facilitate its use for market purposes and enhance its overall visual quality will be supported.

Proposals to improve access to the square from Waitrose and its car park, to and from the town centre, and to and from the residential areas north of Church Hill, will be supported in principle.



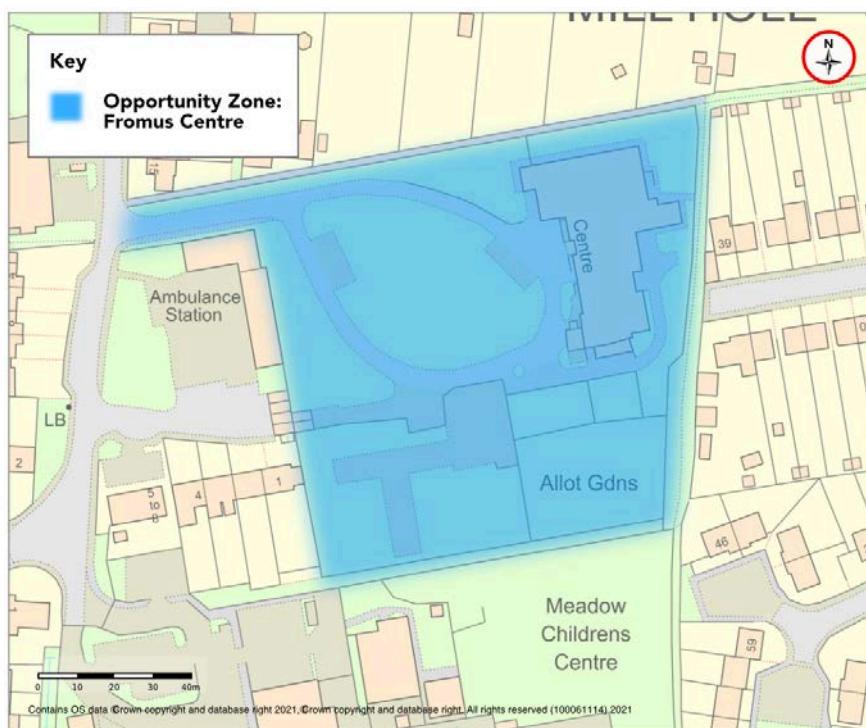
## 15. Opportunity Zone: Former Fromus Centre and Community Garden

**Objective FFC1:** To support good quality development of the area for specialist and other housing purposes and for community use, in particular safeguarding the community garden, and offering improved pedestrian access to and permeability within the site.

- 15.1 The former Fromus Centre Site is located east of Seaman Avenue and to the rear of the Ambulance Station, which itself is located opposite the Fire Station. The centre currently consists of a community building set in an area of open space. It was originally a residential centre for people with special needs, run by Suffolk County Council, which still owns the site. The site includes a Community Garden, which has been created (from a former overgrown kitchen garden site) by local residents to grow food locally and for community benefit purposes.
- 15.2 Vehicular access to the site is from Seaman Avenue via a loop road next to the Ambulance Station, although it is bordered to the east by residential development on Park Avenue there is no vehicular access from this direction.
- 15.3 There is a public path immediately to the north of the site which runs east from Seaman Avenue across the top of the site and comes out on to Mill Road. It is a narrow footpath, relatively well used but not well waymarked. There is also a

second footpath of mainly poor quality at present on the eastern edge of the site and running north-south, also adjoining the former secondary school playing fields and into the area that is due to be the Garden Neighbourhood.

- 15.4 It is understood that the County Council is considering options for the re-development of the site mainly for housing purposes including specialist housing to accommodate people with a specific identified need, as well as private housing for sale. The County Council has in principle agreed to preserve the Community Garden with some vehicular access in its present location.
- 15.5 The area is identified as a potential Opportunity Zone where development of the site provides the opportunity to provide environmental benefits in addition to those social benefits that would accrue, in particular, from the development of specialist housing. Such benefits would include retaining the existing community garden (**See Policy SAX15**), offer greater public access and permeability through the site. Opportunities for greater connectivity between areas of the town could also be created through the improvement of the adjacent footpaths and their potential enhancement into a shared use cycleway, encouraging greater connectivity.
- 15.6 The zone has been identified as having archaeological potential and therefore any proposals will need to take this into account.



**POLICY**

**SAXFC1: Former Fromus Centre site and Community Garden Opportunity Zone**

Proposals that would provide an area of housing and open space that includes provision for a significant element of specialist housing including for those with identified special needs will be supported on this site (**figure 40**).

Proposals should retain the existing Community Garden as an undeveloped open space.

Layout and design should provide for appropriate levels of public access and increased permeability by pedestrians and cyclists through the site.

Proposals should provide for improved foot and cycle links between the zone, the town and the Garden Neighbourhood.

In particular, support is given for:

- i. Improved pedestrian links, including public footpath improvements at the north and east of the zone.
- ii. Provision for cyclists at the southeast corner of the zone as far north as Park Avenue, with improvements to the current north-south public footpath.



St JOHN'S  
WELCOMES  
YOU

# 16. Actions/statements of intent by Saxmundham Town Council

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16.1 These statements of intent are included in the Neighbourhood Plan to show the Town Council's commitment to taking action within its powers and resources, or bringing its influence to bear, on matters which are outside the planning system, but which are nevertheless vital to the achievement of the overall vision. They will be carried out over the lifetime of the plan.

16.2 For Saxmundham to be a **thriving and prosperous town** it needs a healthy business community, adequate public parking to support the local economy, and easy and reliable access for those without private transport. To this end the Town Council will:

- i. Promote and support a business network for the town in consultation with local businesses and East Suffolk Council's economic development team.
- ii. Promote a varied programme of events and activities in the town centre for all ages, to encourage its use and enjoyment by residents and visitors.
- iii. Work with the District and County Councils to investigate a) improved short term parking in the town b) the provision of parking bays for quick pull in and deliveries and c) consideration of the introduction of residents' parking permits, where there is support from residents.
- iv. Encourage East Suffolk Council and Greater Anglia to explore ways of linking their car parks to improve accessibility for commuters.
- v. Encouragement and support will be given to improved bus services, and the possibility of a new intra town service will be investigated.

16.3 **A safe and healthy** Saxmundham requires adequate social, community and leisure provision to meet the needs of the residents. The Town Council will:

- i. Undertake consultation with the community on whether/what types of further indoor sports provision is required, what form(s) it should take, and where it might be provided. Work in partnership with public and private sector bodies to identify funding (including CIL) to support the delivery of the preferred option.
- ii. Lobby for and support initiatives for new or expanded medical facilities.



- iii. Support the establishment of land to the east of the railway as a public open space/country park/SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) as included in the Local Plan, for use by the whole community, and (through the natural greening of the whole site) work towards increasing its biodiversity.
- iv. Develop an overall green infrastructure plan for the town and the rural parts of the parish. To be progressively implemented with support from local interest groups, landowners and East Suffolk Council.
- v. Create a comprehensive circular walk around the town.
- vi. Investigate initiatives to improve facilities for cyclists, including, but not limited to:
  - a) a review of the three communities cycle route and its possible expansion to include additional routes through and around the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood.
  - b) the provision of a safe cycle link from Benhall to Saxmundham and on to Kelsale, using existing rights of way and/or inside the existing hedgerow along the B1121.
  - c) ensure that enough and safe cycle parking and storage facilities are available within the town.
- vii. Lobby for and, within resources, work to implement footpath widening and other relevant measures to improve pedestrian safety along Rendham Road.
- viii. Continue to support voluntary and other organisations which provide community and social facilities within the town, in particular for young people and children, and for those sections of the community who are vulnerable or isolated or have special needs. Where possible, the Town Council will seek to promote more effective coordination of such services for the parish.
- ix. Work to secure or enhance for the community of Saxmundham a full range of public and community facilities and services to meet the growing population of the town and its environment.

16.4 To maintain Saxmundham's distinctive character and attractive environment, and further enhance it, the Town Council will:

- i. Support and promote proposals for traffic calming and environmental improvements in the town centre including the station area, in order to
  - a) reduce traffic speeds in the town centre, b) reduce the number of HGVs using the town centre (except for deliveries and loading) c) remove illegal parking particularly pavement parking, d) improve the safety and environment for pedestrians, cyclists and those with reduced mobility.



- ii. Support the renovation of 32 High Street commercial property and archway and creation of an attractive approach to the riverside in the town centre.
- iii. Support improvement to and greening of the pathway connecting Fromus Square to the Fromus bridge and to the housing estate.
- iv. Work for the upgrading of the Market Hall's frontage, seeking grant funding.
- v. Implemented plans for the redesign and environmental upgrade of the Memorial Field.

16.5 Note: the above statements of intent are not intended to be comprehensive; the Town Council will seek to take the above and other steps as practicable and as prioritised, to support the full realisation of the Neighbourhood Plan's vision, objectives and policies, within its resources and competences.





# 17. Implementation and monitoring

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## Implementation

- 17.1 The planning policies contained in the Plan will be implemented by the East Suffolk Council. The Town Council's role is to bring its influence to bear on matters which lie outside the control of the planning system, but which are of vital importance to the life of the town and the achievement of the vision. The Town Council will support and encourage proposals which further the aims of the Plan, it will promote and encourage and facilitate co-operative working and partnership between public and private interests and lobby for change where this furthers the vision for the town.
- 17.2 Through the development of the Neighbourhood Plan a number of actions/projects have been identified which lie outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan policies but nevertheless are important issues to local residents and therefore require attention. These are outlined below.

## Monitoring

- 17.3 It is good practice for Neighbourhood Plans to undergo a formal review process in consultation with the local community and the relevant District Council at a minimum of every five years, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is still current and remains a positive planning tool to deliver sustainable growth. In order to determine when a review is necessary, the Town Council will monitor development in the parish along with local and national planning policy and in the appropriate legislative context.
- 17.4 It is anticipated the Neighbourhood Plan will require further review during its life and that it will be the role of the Town Council to update the Neighbourhood Plan at the appropriate time. It is possible that further development will take place during the Neighbourhood Plan period (2020 – 2036).
- 17.5 Any review will provide an opportunity to reassess the town's housing and economic markets and to resolve some of the bigger issues surrounding

development in and around the town including the Garden Neighbourhood, Energy Infrastructure Projects and the town centre.





# Appendix

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## Appendix A: Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members

- **Geraldine Barker**, Town Councillor
- **Christine Buttery (vice-chair)**, local resident
- **Diana Eastman**, local resident
- **John Findlay (vice-chair)**, Town Councillor
- **Nick Jackson** (until August 2025)
- **Stephen Palmer**, local resident
- **Justin Power**, local resident
- **Jeremy Smith (chair)**, Town Councillor
- **John White**, local resident

### Observer

- **John Fisher**, District and Town Councillor

### Supported by

- **Sharon Smith**, Town Clerk

### Independent Consultants

- **Andrea Long**, Compasspoint Planning
- **Rachel Leggett**, Rachel Leggett & associates
- **Emma Harrison**, Rachel Leggett & associates

## Appendix B: Justification for Non-designated Heritage Assets

The table below outlined the justification for the inclusion of important character buildings and historic features. The criteria is based on the 'Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7', page 9.

1. The United Reformed Church, Chapel Road and its graveyard	
<b>Age</b>	Founded in 1844, this building erected in 1850.
<b>Rarity</b>	NA.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Local landmark.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	Graveyard is on the Suffolk Monuments Record (SXM 025).
<b>Historic interest</b>	Originally a Congregational church, now United Reformed Church.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Imposing and prominent. Visible from outside the town.

Figure 41: The United Reformed Church , Chapel Road.

2. The Old Fire Station, Rendham Road	
<b>Age</b>	1915 with later additions up to WWII. Closed in 1995.
<b>Rarity</b>	Fairly rare survivor.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	NA.
<b>Group value</b>	Close to the United Reformed Church
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None identified.
<b>Historic interest</b>	Town history.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Town history and WWII associations.





Figure 42: The Old Fire Station, Rendham Road.

### 3. Toll Gate Cottage, North Entrance

<b>Age</b>	1785.
<b>Rarity</b>	Rare, surviving Toll Gate on the former London to Gt Yarmouth turnpike.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Striking reddish exterior and wooden cladding construction; altered.
<b>Group value</b>	May have originally been part of a group.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	None known.
<b>Historic interest</b>	A toll house operated by the Ipswich to South Town Turnpike Trust from 1785.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Marks the entrance to the town from the north.

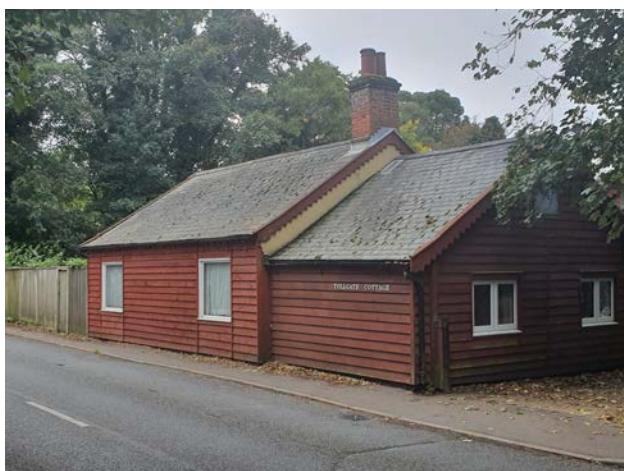


Figure 43: Toll Gate Cottage, North Entrance.

#### 4. The Layers

<b>Age</b>	The Layers is so called because farmers would bring their livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens etc) to Saxmundham Livestock Market (which was situated on the current Waitrose site). Prior to going to the market, the livestock would be "laid up" on The Layers in an assortment of pens and enclosures.
<b>Rarity</b>	Potentially the largest area of unrecorded archaeological interest in the parish.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Provides important undeveloped southern entrance to the town and makes significant contribution to its rural setting.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	Archaeological finds across the site. According to the Historic Environment Record held by Suffolk County Council, Geophysical survey in The Layers provided evidence for significant archaeological activity in the east of the site. Anomalies relating to a trackway and adjoining settlement are present. There is evidence for enclosure ditches and possible sub-enclosures and there are discrete responses present that could be related to the remains of the structures or areas of burning or industrial activities. There is a change in the background magnetic responses in the east of the area that is suggestive of a change to, or an increase in the amount of alluvial deposits, presumably associated with the adjacent watercourse.
<b>Historic interest</b>	The area of land where stockmen would 'lay-up' their stock prior to the biweekly livestock sale. From 1831 – 1939, Saxmundham also hosted the annual Suffolk Show a total of 14 times. Used as a camping ground by the 6 <sup>th</sup> Suffolk cyclists during the Great War. On the southern edge of the layers at Kiln Lane, Bigsby's Corner, there still stands the former "Pest House", originally known as "The Small-Pox House". This is where inhabitants of Saxmundham were put in quarantine if they were suffering from infectious diseases. This was also used during WW1 for housing for Italian POWs.



	<p>During the First World War, The Layers was used for temporary military accommodation by the army. In WWII, The Layers became an important landmark of national and international history when plans were put in place for the D Day Landings and the need to deliver armoured vehicles that could clear mines and other coastal defences. Winston Churchill personally selected Major General Percy Hobart to head up the 79<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division. Hobart chose to base the 79<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division at Hurts Hall. The peculiar looking vehicles became known as "Hobart's Funnies". They were first tested on The Layers before being trialled at Fritton Lake, Orford and Shingle Street. It was because of this that Churchill, Montgomery and General Eisenhower (supreme allied commander of Allied Forces in Europe) all visited Saxmundham in January 1944. They came to inspect "Hobart's Funnies" and to plan for the Normandy Landings.</p>
<b>Landmark status</b>	Historical associations from medieval times to WWII and acts as an important undeveloped entrance to the town and provides the setting of the south entrance.

Figure 44: The Layers.

5. Milestone/post on the B1121	
<b>Age</b>	18th or 19th century.
<b>Rarity</b>	Fairly rare.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Simple milestone. Alternative spelling of town's name – Saxmundum. London 89. Woodbridge 12, Ipswich 20, Lowestoft 24.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	At one time had a cast iron face made by Garretts of Ipswich, now lost. The stone may pre-date this.

<b>Historic interest</b>	On the Ipswich and South Town turnpike an historic coaching route from London to Lowestoft.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Associations with the historic route from London to Lowestoft.
	

Figure 45: Milestone/post on B1121.

6. The Pill Box on the Memorial Field	
<b>Age</b>	WWII.
<b>Rarity</b>	Noted as a last survivor.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Hexagonal pillbox.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	On Suffolk Monuments Record (SXM 027), 'pillbox at Saxmundham, the last survivor from the nodal point defences' (A guide to Second World War Archaeology in Suffolk – Guide 4, Stope Lines. Robert Liddiard and David Sims).
<b>Historic interest</b>	WWII interest.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Formed part of the coastal defences in WWII.





Figure 46: The Pill Box on the Memorial Field.

## 7. The War Memorial in Fromus Square

<b>Age</b>	2004.
<b>Rarity</b>	Not rare.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Cornish granite.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historic interest</b>	WWI and WWII interest.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Focus of Remembrance Day Ceremony.



Figure 47: The War Memorial in Fromus Square.

### 8. The Town Pump

<b>Age</b>	1838 cast by Garretts of Leiston.
<b>Rarity</b>	Only recorded pump.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	NA.
<b>Group value</b>	None.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historic interest</b>	Given to the town by William Long of Hurts Hall.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Was the source of water for the town prior to the arrival of piped water.



Figure 48: The Town Pump.

### 9. The Gannon Institute, but generally known as The Gannon Rooms

<b>Age</b>	Circa 1900.
<b>Rarity</b>	Constructed specifically as a one off to benefit the town.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Significant details on end gables and over windows.
<b>Group value</b>	None.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historic interest</b>	WWI interest, was used as a VAD hospital.
<b>Landmark status</b>	A charitable Trust founded for the benefit of the residents of Saxmundham.



Figure 49: The Gannon Institute, but generally known as The Gannon Rooms.

#### 10. The Water Tower, Rendham Road

<b>Age</b>	1952.
<b>Rarity</b>	One of the tallest water towers in East Anglia, standing at over 200ft.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Constructed in concrete, but unique in design as all water towers are. No two are exactly the same.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	An important part of Britain's engineering heritage.
<b>Historic interest</b>	Replaced the water pump as a means of storing water for the town and guarantees water pressure when demand increases at peak times.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Situated at the highest point in the Town. Visible from miles around, whether approaching Saxmundham from any direction by foot, bicycle, car or train.



Figure 50: The Water Tower, Rendham Road.

### 11. The Telephone Exchange, High Street

<b>Age</b>	1950s.
<b>Rarity</b>	An iconic example of 1950's industrial architecture.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Designed by Thomas Winterburn, one of the ten architects associated with the Festival of Britain movement.
<b>Historic interest</b>	Functioned as a busy working post office and telephone exchange until the 1970's.



Figure 51: The Telephone Exchange, High Street.

### 12. Victorian Post Box at the Station

<b>Age</b>	c1856
<b>Rarity</b>	Rare, has an unusual internal flap to keep the post dry, unfortunately damaged in recent refurbishment.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Embossed with VR and Crown
<b>Group Value</b>	One of a small number of prominent letterboxes in the town in key locations.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historical interest</b>	Manufactured by Smith and Hawkes Broad Street, Birmingham
<b>Landmark status</b>	Integral part of the original station building



Figure 52: Victorian Post Box at the Station.

### 13. Saxmundham Goods Shed

<b>Age</b>	Circa 1859.
<b>Rarity</b>	Common at the peak of the railway era, however, has rarity value as many have been lost.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Typical or railway architecture at that time.
<b>Group Value</b>	Part of the station complex, a key group of buildings in the town centre.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historical interest</b>	Part of the station complex, a key group of buildings in the town centre.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Identified in the Conservation Appraisal as an unlisted building which makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.



Figure 53: Saxmundham Goods Shed.

#### 14. Victorian Post Box at South Entrance

<b>Age</b>	Late 19 <sup>th</sup> Century
<b>Rarity</b>	Common at their peak of Victoria's reign however, rarity value increasing over time
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Embossed with VR and crown
<b>Group Value</b>	One of a small number of prominent letterboxes in the town in key locations.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historical interest</b>	Manufactured by W.T. Allen and Co London.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Prominent location in a wall at the south entrance



Figure 54: Victorian Post-box at South entrance

#### 15. George V post-box North Entrance

<b>Age</b>	1932
<b>Rarity</b>	Common at the peak of George V's reign.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Embossed with crown and GR
<b>Group Value</b>	Built into a significant old wall. The wall is identified in the Conservation Appraisal as being of importance.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historical interest</b>	Manufactured by W.T. Allen and Co London
<b>Landmark status</b>	Prominent location in a wall identified as having heritage value.



Figure 55: George V post-box at north entrance.

## Appendix C: Justification for Local Green Spaces

The table below outlines the justification for the inclusion of each Local Green Space identified. The criteria are based on criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

### 1. The Memorial Field

**Description:** The Memorial Field is owned by Saxmundham Town Council and was established after the First World War as a memorial to those who lost their lives.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The Memorial Field is within a residential area of the town on the Rendham Road
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The Memorial Field is a well-used recreation ground with a skate park and scout hut. It is used for fun fairs and other one-off community events.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	It is in character with a town recreational space and is not an extensive tract of land



Figure 56: The Memorial Field.

### 2. Carlton Park

**Description:** Carlton Park is a sportsground owned and run by Saxmundham Sports and Recreational Club.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Carlton Park is adjacent to the northern boundary of the built-up area of the town. It is only partly within the parish of Saxmundham.
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<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Carlton Park is an essential feature of town life providing sports pitches, tennis courts, a bowling green and an adventure playground (NEAP standard). The site is designated in the East Suffolk Local Plan as 'historic parkland'
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Carlton Park is approximately 11 hectares in total which when considered in the context of the overall area of the town is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.



Figure 57: Carlton Park.

### 3. Seaman Avenue Playground

**Description:** Seaman Avenue playground is a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) and is owned by Saxmundham Town Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The playground is within a residential area and close to the Free School.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The playground is an essential feature of town life, providing facilities for 8 -14-year-olds, including a teenage shelter.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The playground is in character with a town playground and is approximately 2 hectares in size.



Figure 58: Seaman Avenue Playground.

#### 4. Chantry Road Playground

**Description:** Chantry Road Playground is a Local Area for {Play (LAP) and is owned by Saxmundham Town Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Chantry Road Playground is adjacent to the town centre.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The playground is an essential feature of town life providing facilities for 4 – 6-year-olds.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The playground is in character with a town recreational space and is approximately 0.5 hectares and not an extensive tract of land.



Figure 59: Chantry Road Playground.

## 5. Thurlow Close Playground

**Description:** Thurlow Close Playground is a Local Area for Play (LAP) and is owned by East Suffolk Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Thurlow Close playground is within a large housing estate.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Thurlow Close playground provides facilities close to home for 4–6-year-olds.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Thurlow Close Playground is in character with a residential area recreation space and surrounding green area and is approximately 1.12 hectares in size and is not an extensive tract of land.



Figure 60: Thurlow Close Playground.

## 6. The Community Garden at the former Fromus Centre at Seaman Avenue

**Description:** The community garden has plots cultivated by local residents. It is owned by Suffolk County Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The Community Garden is situated within a residential area and close to the school.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and</b>	The Community Garden was created by residents to help offset food miles and produce locally grown food.

<b>holds a particular local significance</b>	
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	It is local in character (approximately 0.1hectares)and not an extensive tract of land.
	Figure 61: The Community Garden at the former Fromus Centre.

## 7. Garden of The Old Bank (formerly Sax 'cess House)

**Description:** The garden of Sax 'cess House is a community garden run by the Access Community Trust.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The garden is in the town centre.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The garden is for all to enjoy and also provides support and activities for the disadvantaged and isolated.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The garden is in character with a town centre location and is not an extensive tract of land (Approximately 0.1 hectares).





Figure 62: Garden of The Old Bank, formerly Sax'cess House

## 8. Gull Stream path

**Description:** The Gull Stream path is an enhanced public footpath owned and maintained by East Suffolk Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The Gull Stream Path passes through a large area of housing
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The Gull Stream path provides a wildlife corridor, areas of SUDS and an alternative route to the centre of town away from traffic.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The Gull Stream Path is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.(Approximately 1 hectare)

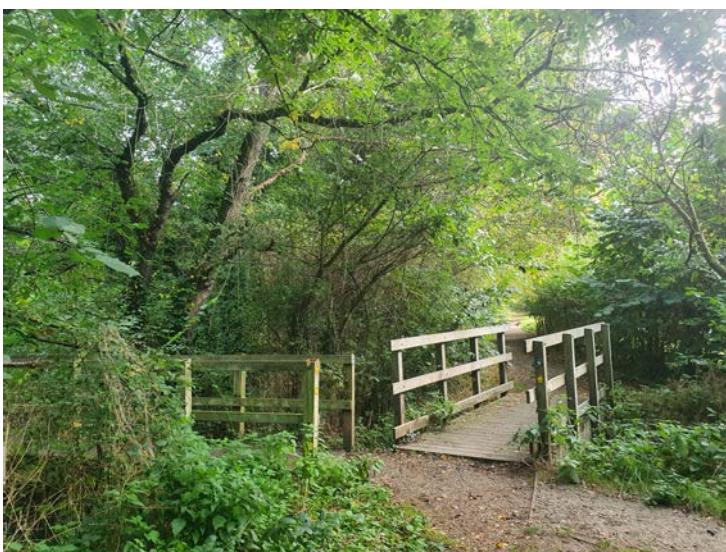


Figure 63: Gull Stream path.

## 9. Saxon Road allotments

**Description:** Allotments owned by Housing Association for use by Housing Association tenants.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Located within the built-up area and surrounded by residential development
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Community value through their use as allotments by the Housing Association tenants
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The allotments are local in character and not an extensive tract of land. Approximately 0.03 acres.



Figure 64: Saxon Road allotments.

## 11. Fromus Green and Play Area

**Description:** Fromus Green and Play Area is an open amenity space and includes a children's play area. It is owned and maintained by East Suffolk Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Fromus Green is in the town centre between the High Street and Hopkins Homes housing estate.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Fromus Green is an essential feature of the town being the only open space for general community use in the heart of the town.

<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Fromus Green is in character with a town recreational space and at 1.12 hectares is not an extensive tract of land when considered in the context of the area of the town a whole.
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Figure 65: Fromus Green and Play Area.



## Appendix D: Glossary

Glossary of terms used and/or relevant to the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan and supporting submission documents.

**Affordable housing:** 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:

- a) **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 per cent 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).
- b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of Plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) **Discounted market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20 per cent 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.
- d) **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 per cent 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.

**Ancient or veteran tree:** A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

**Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

**Backland Development:** Development that involves the re-use of parts of a number of rear gardens to existing houses for further residential development.

**Carbon Free:** Where the construction and operation of a development does not involve the use of carbon or its release into the atmosphere

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Commercial Development:** Retail, business uses, offices, workshops, light industrial

**Conservation:** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

**Deliverable:** To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. Sites that are not major development, and sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (e.g. they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). Sites with outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in the development plan or identified on a brownfield register should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

**Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Development plan:** Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

**Employment Uses:** Former B1 now Use Class E g) i-iii) – Offices, administration, light industry, research and development.

**Environmental impact assessment:** A procedure to be followed for certain types of projects to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Habitats site:** Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

**Health and Social Care, Community Support Services :** Use Classes E e) . Medical services not attached to the premises of the practitioner.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Hospitality:** Use Classes E a), E b), includes Public Houses, bars, cafes, restaurants, hotels, etc.

**Infill Development:** Development that takes place on small gaps between existing buildings.

**International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity:** All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

**Local housing need:** the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.

**Local planning authority:** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

**Local plan:** A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

**Major development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floor space of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Mitigation Hierarchy:** A term to incorporate the avoid, reduce, mitigate, compensate process that applicants need to go through to protect the environment and biodiversity.

**Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs):** NSIPs are large scale major development projects in England or Wales which fall into the following categories: energy, transport, waste, waste water, water. They can be projects such as: power generating stations, offshore wind farms, electricity lines, new roads, railway lines,

hazardous waste facilities, waste-water treatment plants and reservoirs. As this type of development is nationally important, consent for a project needs to be given by the government rather than the local planning authority.

**Neighbourhood Development Order:** An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which parish councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Neighbourhood plan:** A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

**Non-designated heritage asset:** Local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These 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 identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed'. A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process. (Definition from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#non-designated-heritage-assets>).

**Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

**Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Original building:** A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

**Out of centre:** A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

**Out of town:** A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

**Planning condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning obligation:** A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Playing field:** The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Primary shopping area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated.

**Priority habitats and species:** Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**Ramsar sites:** Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Retail:** Use Classes Ea, F1 and F2a – Shops, local commerce.

**Self-build and custom-build housing:** Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

**Service industries:** Use Classes E c i), ii), iii ) Businesses not involved in manufacturing that provide a service e.g. finance, banking, estate agents, accountants, personal services, hairdressers, beauticians, opticians, etc.

**Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Significance** (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

**Strategic environmental assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Strategic policies:** Policies and site allocations, which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Strategic policy-making authorities:** Those authorities responsible for producing strategic policies (local planning authorities, and elected Mayors or combined authorities, where this power has been conferred). This definition applies whether the authority is in the process of producing strategic policies or not.

**Supplementary planning documents:** Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

**Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** is a term for a set of environmentally-friendly techniques that are designed to help manage and control surface water runoff. They do not apply to foul water drainage. Examples of SuDS include drainage lagoons, attenuation basins, swales, green roofs and permeable paving.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG):** High quality natural/semi natural green space.

**Tandem development:** Development on land set back behind existing properties often existing houses, utilising brownfield or garden land generally with limited street frontage.

**Transport assessment:** A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and measures that will be needed to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

**Transport statement:** A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

**Travel plan:** A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

**Wildlife corridor:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations. Windfall sites: Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

**Use Classes Order:** National classification of land uses as contained within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2021 (source: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)).

**Windfall Development:** Development that takes place on sites not usually identified in the development plan. They typically include subdivisions, barn conversions or small infill plots.

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## Appendix E: Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area



