



Southwold Neighbourhood Plan Proposal 2020-2039

Summary Document - Policies Only
Regulation 16 Consultation
March 2021

PREFACE

The Southwold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has been working on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for six years. We have consulted widely with the community through drop-in sessions, focus groups and questionnaires. Our extensive research is summarised in the Supplementary Evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan Proposal. Our approach was to identify the challenges facing Southwold, especially those which emerged from our 2016 Neighbourhood Plan questionnaires and contained in the 2013 Southwold Town Plan, and then develop policies to meet those challenges. The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan has to be on planning matters and it is essentially a supplement to the new Waveney Local Plan (2019).

Following the formal Regulation 14 Consultation launched on November 1st 2018, we received detailed comments from residents, from key stakeholders (for example East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, the Environment Agency) and from the Southwold and Reydon Society. We have analysed these, thought carefully about them, and revised the text and the policies accordingly. Our detailed responses to the submissions can be found in our Consultation Document.

The revised **Neighbourhood Plan Proposal, Character Area Assessments** (which form an integral part of the Plan), **Supplementary Evidence and Consultation Document**, can all be found on the Southwold Town Council webpage and can also be viewed at the Town Hall, by appointment. This document summarises just the revised policies. There are three new policies, SWD1 on Affordable Housing, SWD3 on Holiday Letting and SWD8 on Extension of Existing Employment Area, and the wording of other policies has been revised. All the changes are in response to the Regulation 14 submissions. They need to read in conjunction with the full wording of the Neighbourhood Plan, and also in conjunction with the Consultation Document (especially section 3).

We are making this summary document widely available in the Town

The Southwold Neighbourhood Plan Proposal now enters its final 'Regulation 16' consultation, prior to its submission by East Suffolk Council to the External Examiner. Any comments should be sent to the Town Clerk, Town Hall, Market Place, Southwold IP18 6EF. If approved by the Examiner, the Plan will be put to those on the Electoral Register in Southwold in a referendum, which is unlikely to take place before 2021.

Cllr Michael Rowan-Robinson
Chair, Southwold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We have benefited from advice from our consultant, Chris Bowden of Navigus Planning, and from Waveney District Council, East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council officers. We thank Megan Lloyd-Regan of Place Services for her work on the Character Area Assessments. We also thank the many members of the community who have contributed to the Plan.

SOUTHWOLD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP

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Figure 1.1: Southwold Neighbourhood Plan area boundary



POLICIES

POLICY SWD1 – REDEVELOPING ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE FOR COMMUNITY LED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OF PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- A. Proposals to redevelop a registered Asset of Community Value within the settlement boundary to part community use and part affordable housing will be supported in exceptional circumstances where:**
- i. it can be demonstrated that the current and alternative community uses for the whole of the site have been fully explored and that the redevelopment is necessary to enable the retention and continued use of part of the ACV for community use; and**
 - ii. if community use is provided on only part of the site, then a Section 106 (or other enforceable) agreement will be required to ensure that this use is for the benefit of the community and is controlled by an eligible voluntary or community body as defined in the Localism Act 2011 (a parish council or voluntary or community body with a local connection); and**
 - iii. the change of use of the rest of the site is restricted to permanently affordable housing.**
- B. The change of use of any part of the site for permanently affordable housing should be delivered by a Community Led Housing Group.**
- C. Cross-subsidy of permanently affordable housing with an element of market housing may be permitted if it is demonstrated through an independent, community-led housing viability study that market housing is essential to make the mixed community and affordable housing scheme viable. Any market housing demonstrated as necessary to cross-subsidise affordable housing must be no more than one third of the dwellings.**
- D. If all of the criteria set out in A-C above are met (along with the other relevant policies in the NP, Local Plan and National Planning Framework), then a mixed community and affordable housing scheme will be permitted.**

POLICY SWD2 – REDEVELOPING COMMUNITY USES FOR PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- A. Proposals to redevelop community land or buildings within the settlement boundary will be supported based on a hierarchy of preferred uses. Lower priority uses will only be considered if, following a sustained marketing campaign that meets the requirements of Local Plan Policy WLP 8.22, higher priority schemes do not come forward. In descending order of priority, the preferred uses are:**
- i. Solely community uses;**
 - ii. If, and only if, a proposal for solely community use does not come forward during the marketing campaign, then development of a mix of community use and permanently affordable housing will be permitted.**
 - iii. If, and only if, a proposal for uses i- ii does not come forward during the marketing campaign, then development of the whole site for permanently affordable housing will be permitted.**
 - iv. If, and only if, a proposal for uses i- iii does not come forward during the marketing campaign, then an affordable housing scheme delivered by a housing association will be permitted.**
 - v. If none of the above uses come forward during the marketing campaign, then alternative uses will be permitted.**
- B. The change of use of any part of the site for permanently affordable housing should be delivered by a Community Led Housing Group.**
- C. Cross-subsidy of permanently affordable housing with an element of market housing may be permitted if it is demonstrated through an independent, community-led housing viability study that market housing is essential to make the mixed community and affordable housing scheme viable. Any market housing demonstrated as necessary to cross-subsidise affordable housing must be no more than one third of the dwellings.**
- D. For a scheme to be approved, evidence must be provided that all of the conditions in A-C above have been met and the marketing campaign complies with Local Plan Policy 8.22.**

POLICY SWD3 – REDEVELOPING EXISTING EMPLOYMENT AREAS FOR PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- A. Proposals to redevelop land in Existing Employment Areas within the settlement boundary will be supported based on a hierarchy of preferred uses. Lower priority uses will only be considered if, following a sustained marketing campaign that meets the requirements of Local Plan Policy WLP 8.12, higher priority schemes do not come forward. In descending order of priority, the preferred uses are:**
- i. A solely employment use.**
 - ii. If, and only if, a proposal for solely employment use does not come forward during the marketing campaign, then development of a mix of employment and permanently affordable housing will be permitted.**
 - iii. If, and only if, a proposal for uses i- ii does not come forward during the marketing campaign, then development of the whole site for a solely permanently affordable housing will be permitted.**
 - iv. If, and only if, a proposal for uses i- iii does not come forward during the marketing campaign, then an affordable housing scheme delivered by a housing association will be permitted.**
 - v. If, and only if, a proposal for uses i- iv does not come forward during the marketing campaign, then alternative uses will be permitted.**
- B. The change of use of any part of the site for permanently affordable housing should be delivered by a Community Led Housing Group.**
- C. Cross-subsidy of permanently affordable housing with an element of market housing may be permitted if it is demonstrated through an independent, community-led housing viability study that market housing is essential to make the mixed community and affordable housing scheme viable. Any market housing demonstrated as necessary to cross-subsidise affordable housing must be no more than one third of the dwellings.**
- D. All applications should demonstrate through a Design and Access Statement that the proposed residential use is compatible with the surrounding employment uses in terms of car parking, access, noise, odour and other amenity concerns.**
- E. For a scheme to be approved, evidence must be provided that all of the conditions in A-D above have been met and the marketing campaign complies with Local Plan Policy 8.12.**

POLICY SWD4 - PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT

Proposals for all new housing (including affordable housing but excluding replacement dwellings) will only be supported where first and future occupation is restricted in perpetuity to ensure that each new dwelling is occupied only as a Principal Residence.

Principal Residence housing is defined as a property which is occupied as the sole or main home of the occupants and where the occupants spend the majority of their time when their employment does not required them to be away from home for purposes of their work.

New housing includes both dwellings that are newly constructed or created through change of use.

These restrictions will be secured prior to the grant of planning permission through appropriate Planning Conditions or Planning Obligations created and enforceable under section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, or any subsequent successor legislation.

POLICY SWD5 – HOLIDAY LETTING

New C3 development for holiday letting (sui generis) or change of an existing C3 use to holiday let will only be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that all of the following requirements have been met:

- a) Sufficient car parking space can be provided within the curtilage of the building in accordance with Policy SWD7 (Parking).
- b) Taking into account the cumulative and indirect impacts of the high volume of holiday letting, there are no significant impacts on amenity.

POLICY SWD6 - DESIGN

In order to create high quality buildings and places that are beautiful and enduring, applications for all development in the Area, including small-scale development, must be informed by the National Design Guide.

All planning applications must demonstrate, either through the Design and Access Statement where this is required or through sufficiently detailed plans and documents, that they have:

- A. understood and followed the process for creating high quality design set out in the National Design Guide;**
- B. understood and proposed design that is sympathetic to and in keeping with the best of the prevailing local character area;**
- C. maximized the opportunities to improve the quality of design;**
- D. positively addressed the Recurrent Design Issues and area-specific Sensitivities and Susceptibilities identified in the Southwold Character Area Appraisal (SCAA) and reinstated character where the SCAA identifies opportunities for this; and**
- E. where relevant, addressed heritage management issues identified in the Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal.**

Applications that fail to demonstrate A – E above will be refused.

POLICY SWD7 – PARKING

- A. Development proposals that create a demand for vehicle parking should meet the requirements of the Suffolk Highways Guidance 2019. Alternative levels of provision will only be supported if the application demonstrates a clear local benefit such as enabling the provision of affordable housing, community and employment space, and is of a high quality design that preserves and enhances bio-diversity.**
- B. Applications which include new on-site residential parking provision will be supported provided the scheme:**
- **does not result in a car-dominated street scape; and**
 - **preserves and enhance biodiversity; and**
 - **does not create an open frontage in areas where enclosed front boundaries prevail; and**
 - **preserves a good quality of garden amenity space for existing and future occupants of the site; and**
 - **uses permeable surfacing, where possible. Where this is not possible, it should be demonstrated how surface water will be drained on-site.**
- C. The use of on-street parking in order to satisfy the requirements of the Suffolk Highways Guidance 2019 will be expected to:**
- **be well integrated into the layout and street scene, ensuring safety and avoiding obstruction for all users, in particular pedestrians and cyclists; and**
 - **applications within areas of parking stress (as shown on the policies map) must demonstrate that there are spare on-street parking spaces within peak demand periods to accommodate the additional demand.**
- D. Development that results in the loss of existing off-street or on-street parking will be required to provide the same number of new parking spaces in the Parking Zone in which the proposed development is located.**
- E. In determining applications that include parking provision, great weight will be given to achieving high quality design that respects the character and feel of Southwold, and to preserving and enhancing biodiversity.**

POLICY SWD8 – SMALL SHOP UNITS

In order to retain the vitality and character of Southwold's retail offer, development will be expected to retain the profile of predominantly small shop units in the town. In the Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages, proposals to materially increase the size of an existing retail unit will only be supported if the existing smaller shop unit is demonstrated not to be commercially viable. This should be done by undertaking a comprehensive marketing campaign of at least 12 months in accordance with Appendix 4 of the Waveney Local Plan (marketing requirements).

POLICY SWD9 – SOLO WORKERS, MICRO BUSINESSES

Development proposals to provide start-up and grow-on B1 Class business space on flexible terms will be supported. This could be through:

- A. conversion of existing buildings across the Neighbourhood Plan area;
or
- B. provision of new buildings within the settlement boundary of Southwold town, and in particular on the Station Yard development site in Policy SWD15.

POLICY SWD10 – EXTENSION OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT AREA

The Local Plan's Existing Employment Area is extended as shown in the map in section 15.2 to include employment areas:

- i. The complex of Adnams plc employment space on Church Street, Victoria Street, Cumberland Road and East Green;
- ii. The Southwold Business Centre, off St Edmund's Road

Development is expected to meet the requirements of Waveney Local Plan Policy 8.12 (Existing Employment Areas)

POLICY SWD11 – PROVISION FOR WILDLIFE IN DEVELOPMENT

All development proposals should incorporate features which provide net gains to biodiversity. Examples of such features could include:

- bird boxes
- bat boxes
- nectar rich planting schemes for pollinators
- native trees and shrubs
- hedgehog runs
- crevices and plantings between paving stones

POLICY SWD12 – LOSS OF PRIVATE GARDEN SPACE

On the basis of the harm most types of garden development are considered to cause to character, there is a presumption against development in gardens which are identified in the Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal or Southwold Character Area Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the character of the area. Proposals for development other than ancillary structures in these gardens must clearly demonstrate how, through their design, layout and use of materials, they retain or enhance the character of the garden space.

For all other proposals, development (except permitted development) in gardens and courtyards will only be permitted where the application demonstrates that:

- A. The size of the remaining garden is generally consistent with the predominant pattern of garden spaces in the surrounding character area; and
- B. The scale, design and siting of the proposal will not detract from the visual amenity of the streetscape; and
- C. Where vegetation is removed, detailed landscaping plans are provided for the re-greening of the site with replacement vegetation that promotes wildlife habitat.

Where garden structures with living space ancillary to the main residence (such as a game room, office/studio/study, or garden room) are proposed, a Planning Obligation or Planning Condition will be imposed to prevent their use for holiday letting unless they meet the following requirements:

- a) Sufficient car parking space can be provided within the curtilage of the building in accordance with Policy SWD7 (Parking);
- b) Taking into account the cumulative and indirect impacts of the high volume of holiday letting, there are no significant impacts on amenity and community services.

POLICY SWD13 – LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following areas, as shown on the maps in Section 15.5 – 15.8, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- South Green
- Gun Hill
- Bartholomew Green
- St Edmund's Green
- North Green
- Barnaby Green
- North Parade Green
- East Green
- St James's Green
- East Cliff Green

Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless the proposal is of a limited nature and is clearly demonstrated to be an ancillary use that it is required solely to enhance the role and function of an identified Local Green Space.

POLICY SWD14 – MINIMISING THE IMPACT OF FLOODING

Development proposals will be required to:

- A. Mitigate flooding from all sources (fluvial and pluvial)
- B. Provide appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which minimise discharge rates unless it can be shown to be inappropriate. SuDS should be well integrated into a development and provide multifunctional benefits, such as landscaping, open space and biodiversity gains; and
- C. Provide for rainwater harvesting where practicable.

Development will not be permitted in flood attenuation areas where that development would reduce the ability of these areas to alleviate flooding.

POLICY SWD15 – LOSS OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposals that would result in the loss of a community facility and no suitable re-provision for the same or an alternative community use elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan area will only be permitted in the following exceptional circumstances:

- A. All the requirements of Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.22 (Built Community Services and Facilities) are met; and
- B. It can clearly be demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to engage with bodies that may have an interest in taking on the running and operation of the facility for its existing or an alternative community purpose.

POLICY SWD16 – DEVELOPMENT SITES

- A. Proposals to redevelop sites within the settlement boundary of Southwold for a mix of uses will be supported where that mix includes one or more of the following uses:
 - i. Residential units that address local housing needs, in line with Policies SWD1-3 (Affordable Housing);
 - ii. Small-scale employment space, especially B1 business space suitable for solo working, micro and small businesses, and small scale retail units; and
 - iii. Community space where there is a demonstrable need for such provision.
- B. In particular, the uses set out in Paragraphs A will be required on the following sites shown on the Policies Map, unless such provision would render development demonstrably unviable or there is a proven lack of need for the use:
 - i. Former Police Station site, Blyth Road
 - ii. Former Fire Station site, Station Road
 - iii. Station Road Courtyard, Blyth Road
- C. The design concepts for the sites specified in B i- iv, and any other site in the Front of Town Area shown on the Policies Map 15.4, should be informed by the Ingleton Wood Design Framework set out in Section 14.
- D. Planning applications for development in the Front of Town Area should include an assessment of the direct and cumulative impacts of the proposed scheme on pedestrian and cycle movements and traffic congestion, and identify and address any infrastructure requirements.

GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing** – as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF (2019): 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). This includes affordable housing for rent; starter homes; discounted market sales housing; and other affordable routes to homeownership including share ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent of at least 20% below local market value and rent to buy).
- **Built form** - this refers to the man-made landscape and the various aspects of physical development within it.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - New development which creates net additional floor space of 100 square metres or more is potentially liable for the levy, which funds the building of infrastructure. In the former Waveney District, it is currently chargeable on residential (excluding affordable housing), supermarkets and holiday lets. An East Suffolk CIL review is due to take place.
- **Local Plan** - the planning policy document prepared by Waveney District Council, covering Southwold parish. This addresses strategic planning matters and the Southwold Neighbourhood Plan, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, must be in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- **Intermediate tenure housing** - Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.
- **Micro-business** - a company employing fewer than ten people.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** - the national planning policy document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** - enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro.